

Life Preserving Services

The DHBs and NZNO have been working collaboratively to mitigate risks to patients and staff during industrial action, by ensuring staff with specialist clinical skills are available for emergency and essential services.

These services are known as Life Preserving which are defined as care for the preservation of life and the prevention of disability.

DHB efforts are going into ensuring we can keep everyone safe – patients and staff alike – and that means significant changes to normal services.

To reduce demand on services and reduce patient numbers as much as possible prior to the strike. non-acute and elective procedures will be deferred leading up to, and after, 5 July. DHBs are contacting people affected to provide more information.

The key point is Emergency and essential services will be available during the strike and all doctors and non-NZNO staff will come to work as normal. Everyone who needs hospital care which cannot be deferred will have it.

The NZNO and DHBs are required by law to work together to ensure there are enough people with the right specialist skills so life preserving services are provided when needed.

Nurses in these roles are known as LPS responders – they will not be performing normal duties, they will only be providing services essential to LPS.

There is also a mechanism for increasing LPS responders if required, and emergency protocols have been agreed in case of a major event such as natural disaster or multiple casualties.

LPS ensures that anyone needing essential medical care will get the help they need. It recognises there is right to strike, and also an obligation to ensure lives are not put at risk.

LPS that will be provided during a strike will vary from DHB to DHB and include services such as:

- Emergency care and surgery including emergency departments, intensive and acute or critical care units for children and adults
- Paediatric wards and maternity units
- Therapeutic services without which life would be put at risk, for example some paediatric, oncology and renal services
- Urgent diagnoses of conditions that could threaten life or cause permanent disability, for example lumbar punctures for meningitis, blood tests for critically ill adults and children
- Intervention to prevent permanent disability, for example setting broken bones or preventing falls

The key points are that in event of a strike:

- Emergency and essential services will be provided
- DHBs and the NZNO are obliged to ensure staff with specialist clinical skills are available to provide life preserving services
- Doctors and all other staff will be working to ensure anyone who needs urgent hospital care will get it
- People in need of urgent hospital care should not delay going to ED or calling 111
- For non-urgent medical matters, people will still have normal access to their GPs, pharmacists and service as such as Healthline (0800 611 116)