



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

General Secretary: Brett Holmes | Assistant General Secretary: Judith Kiejda

📞 (02) 8595 1234 | 🌐 www.facebook.com/nswnma | 🐦 twitter.com/nswnma

8 July, 2015

Serious patient safety concerns raised in Tamworth ED

Members of Tamworth Base Hospital Branch of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) have put the local hospital management on notice over serious concerns regarding patient safety in the emergency department.

Branch members fear Hunter New England Local Health District (HNE LHD) management is in breach of the Public Health System state Award, by not maintaining required staffing in the emergency department during the night duty shift.

Lead Organiser at the NSWNMA, Darius Altman, said members were frustrated the longstanding issue had not been addressed by HNE LHD management and subsequently agreed to highlight their concerns publicly to alert the community.

"We've got a situation where one nurse is being rostered on the night duty shift to cover both roles of designated resuscitation nurse and identified triage nurse within the emergency department of one of the state's busiest rural referral hospitals," Mr Altman said.

"Understandably, the Branch believes the current night duty nurse staffing is insufficient and data collected over a two week period indicates it poses strong risks to safe patient care within the emergency department."

Tamworth Branch President, Matthew Cartan, said the Branch had unanimously passed a resolution on Tuesday seeking the immediate employment of an additional nurse for 10 hours during the night duty shift in the emergency department, seven days a week.

"Management's initial response to our request has been instead to offer an on-call position for two weeks as they collect more data, however, we know there's insufficient staff available to maintain an on-call roster and the data that the Branch has provided is solid," Mr Cartan said.

"Our emergency department nurses are extremely worried about risks to patient safety and have now endorsed a decision not to transfer over to the recently completed facility, until this staffing issue is rectified.

"We've resolved not to close beds in the ED at this stage, as a sign of good faith with our local community, but that does not change the severity of the situation and the urgency required on management's part."

Mr Altman said claims by HNE LHD management that it had only recently been made aware of the issue were unfounded and Branch members were aware a report into staffing in the emergency department was provided to management earlier this year.

MEDIA CONTACTS:



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION
MEDIA RELEASE

Judith Kiejda, Assistant General Secretary, NSWNMA 0414 674 119

Darius Altman, Lead Organiser, NSWNMA 0414 550 058