



Health

Dr Tom Karplus
Secretary
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Our ref H19/134830

Dear Dr Karplus

Consultation on proposed safe working hours standards for Junior Doctors

As part of the JMO Wellbeing and Support Plan which commenced in 2017, the Ministry of Health reviewed a range of safe working hour standards to determine their applicability in managing fatigue and supporting the safer rostering of the junior medical workforce. The first two standards ('Maximum rostered hours' and 'break after rostered shift periods' - the "14/10 standards") went live at the start of the 2018 clinical year.

As part of the Ministry's ongoing commitment to improving the wellbeing of junior doctors, new safe working hours standards are being proposed for the maximum number of nights shifts in a row (and time off afterwards), and the maximum number of days to be worked in a row. The draft standards are attached.

A review of available literature, specialist medical college regulations, professional guidance and approaches in other jurisdictions and countries has been undertaken. The proposed standards align with the available guidelines and are largely consistent with standards in place in other jurisdictions and countries.

We welcome your organisation's feedback on the draft standards by **Tuesday 9 June 2020**. Please submit your comments via email to MOH-MedicalWorkforce@health.nsw.gov.au. If you have any queries, please contact Linda MacPherson Medical Adviser, Workforce Planning and Talent Development on 9391 9107 or email linda.macpherson@health.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Phil Minns
Deputy Secretary
People, Culture and Governance

5.5.2020

Encl.

Consultation document
Proposed new safe working hours standards for NSW Health JMOs

Nights in a row standard

A medical officer must be free from all rostered duties (rostered shifts, on call, rostered and unrostered overtime) for a minimum of 20 hours prior to commencing rostered nights shifts.

1. A medical officer must not be rostered to more than four consecutive night shifts in a row.
2. A medical officer working:
 - **three or four nights** shifts in a row must be free from all rostered duties (rostered shifts, on call, rostered and unrostered overtime) for a minimum of **48 hours** after completing the last rostered night shift to ensure adequate rest time and to minimise sleep deprivation which occurs on night shift. Where operationally possible the number of days free from ordinary duty should equal the number of consecutive night shifts worked;
 - **one or two night shifts** in a row must be free from all rostered duties (rostered shifts, on call, rostered and unrostered overtime) for a minimum of **24 hours** after completing the last rostered night shift to ensure adequate rest time and to minimise sleep deprivation which occurs on night shift. Where operationally possible the number of days free from ordinary duty should equal the number of consecutive night shifts worked.

Consecutive days in a row standard

1. A medical officer must be not rostered for more than seven consecutive days in a row including days, evening and night shifts and on call.
2. A medical officer must be free from all duties (rostered shifts, on call, rostered and unrostered overtime) for a period of at least 24 hours after working seven days in a row.
3. Medical Officers rostered to a Monday to Friday roster must have as a minimum every third weekend (Saturday and Sunday) free from all rostered duties (rostered shifts, on call, rostered and unrostered overtime).

Shift swaps

Each facility should have a process for monitoring and approving JMO roster shifts.

Where a JMO seeks to swap a rostered shift, the swap should comply with safe hours standards.