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Record Numbers of GPs File Warning Notices

A record number of essential family doctor services have filed Clause 14 notices saying they are worried about their ability to deliver services if a nurse pay equity claim is not fully funded.

More than 155 Clause 14 notices had been filed by January 31, the most ever on a single issue.

The action has been sparked by the New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) lodging its Primary Practice Pay Equity Claim against general practice employers in December last year. Most of the notices have also been copied to the Minister of Health Hon Dr Shane Reti and Te Whatu Ora Chief Executive Fepulea'i Margie Apa.

The notices highlight the concerns general practices have in their ability to deliver services to New Zealanders, if the pay equity claim is settled but not fully funded.

The General Practice Owners Association of Aotearoa New Zealand (GenPro) has also received copies of the notices. Its' Chair Dr Angus Chambers says general practices are supportive of a pay equity claim but worry about funding.

“Family doctor services have been struggling with ongoing underfunding for some time and many are reaching breaking point.”

Dr Chambers says the notices paint a strong picture of the current perilous state of general practice. “The reality is many practices are facing significant financial pressures and so a claim like this – with no guarantee of funding support – is incredibly worrying.”

He says the funding model in place does not enable practices to meet the increases of the claim and retain the current level of services, which are already under significant pressure from workforce shortages and ongoing underfunding.

He says general practices value and support their nurses highly.

GenPro would like the Government to support and fund nurse pay parity. “We think if the issue of pay parity for nurses was settled, then this claim and the stress that it is bringing to practices would be resolved.

“The gap in pay between general practice nurses and those in Te Whatu Ora’s hospitals is significant and it’s stripping us of our workforce, undermining immunisation services and making it more difficult and more expensive for people to access their family doctor,” Dr Chambers says.

“The lack of pay parity is the issue here and an equity claim is an alternative means to an end, with pay parity being the end we all want to see.”

ENDS

Further information can be obtained from:

Mark Liddle, Chief Executive

www.genpro.org.nz