

4 MARCH 2016

Public sector mental health enterprise agreement; campaign update #4

The ANMF (Vic Branch) continued negotiations on behalf of Victorian public sector mental health nurse members at the fourth enterprise bargaining meeting yesterday (3 March), held with the employer representatives the Victorian Health Industry Association (VHIA) and the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU).

1. Nurse to patient ratios in mental health.

Employer representatives have advised us in yesterday's negotiations that **they do not support a nurse: patient ratio claim** but are instead satisfied with the status quo. Members will be disappointed with this response. Mandated staffing levels provide certainty about the number of nurses rostered on each shift and the level of care provide to the community. How do the employers explain that nurse/midwife: patient ratios in the general public sector were made law by the Victorian State Government in 2015 but mental health nurses cannot expect the same? Our members employed in mental health deserve the same commitment.

2. Community mental health.

The ANMF is determined to protect community mental health teams from the increasingly heavy workloads that they are being forced to manage. By doing this we are also ensuring that the community has access to these critical teams' services. We await responses to our union agreed position on community workload management. The onerous task of completing unnecessary and often duplicated documentation in mental health remains an important matter for discussion for the ANMF. We continue to impress on the employer representatives that this issue needs to be addressed to free up time for mental health nurses to provide care to the community. This matter is an important item we have identified in our Service Delivery Partnership Plan and our log of claims and can generate a 0.5% wage increase.

3. Other ANMF (Vic Branch) mental health claims.

The employer representatives provided verbal feedback to the ANMF's draft clauses supporting our claims relating to staffing and conditions that were provided at the last meeting. There are on-going discussions and further material will be provided to support our claims including cost assessments. The ANMF will argue that costs associated with claims may also represent productivity savings and improve patient care, such as better access to community mental health nurses and improved access to the right type of care for mental health patients presenting in emergency departments with the introduction of Emergency Liaison Nurses. Other claims relating to a designated nurse unit manager in each ward or unit and the director of nursing on each campus are critical to the clinical care for patients and the career structure for mental health nursing. The log of claims can be viewed on the ANMF campaign page anmfvic.asn.au/campaigns/2016/01/20/eba-2016.

4. ANMF (Vic Branch) mental health members' meeting.

Members are reminded to come to the paid members' meeting for the mental health sector at 2.30pm on **Thursday 31 March** to hear about progress and be empowered with information about the negotiations. The meeting will be held at ANMF House, 540 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, in the Carson Centre room on Level 7. Put it in your diary or add it to the calendar on your new ANMF (Vic Branch) Diary App (anmfvic.asn.au/app). Please note that a separate meeting is being held for general public sector nurses on 23 March.

Join the campaign, attend meetings and achieve the changes you deserve. Enterprise bargaining time is the most critical opportunity to improve your wages and conditions. Our strength is our membership. Most Victorian nurses are already ANMF members – however if you haven't joined yet or you know someone who hasn't, please encourage them to join. Non-members can join online: members.anmfvic.asn.au/CalculateRate.

If you don't have a Job Rep on your ward, unit or community team, it's time to put up your hand and help your union and your colleagues achieve your claims for 2016. Speak to another ANMF Job Rep or call ANMF Reception on 9275 9333 and a Job Rep Pack will be sent out to you.

ANMF will keep you updated via further campaign updates, our website, emails and text messages where appropriate. Please ensure your details are correct by logging into the member portal: members.anmfvic.asn.au.

Pin this update to your workplace noticeboard and keep your team informed.