



Deadline for pay equity interviews coming up

5 September 2019



Pay equity reps: MERAS and NZNO reps on the pay equity oversight group met on 28 August. Left to right: Leila Sparrow, Karen Gray, Elizabeth Winterbee (all from MERAS) and Sue McNabb (NZNO). Joanna Ramsey (NZNO) is also on the team.

Expressions of interest (EOI) forms for those interested in being part of the pay equity process need to be completed and returned by **Monday, 9 September**.

If you are working at Northland, Waitemata, Auckland, Counties Manukau, Tairāwhiti, Capital and Coast, Nelson Marlborough or Canterbury DHBs, you meet the criteria, and please submit an EOI before Monday.

The midwifery interviews will run through October. A sample of DHB-employed community midwives, core midwives, Maori and Pasifika core midwives, Associate Charge Midwives/Midwife Co-ordinators, and Charge Midwives/Charge Midwife Managers will be interviewed.

A panel to include a MERAS representative in each of the participating DHBs will select interviewees from expressions of interest received from midwives who met the agreed criteria in the above roles.

DHB moves on Holidays Act breaches

Electronic time and attendance sheets are to replace paper time sheets at Northland DHB after a review of Holidays Act breaches highlighted problems with the current system. The new system will allow staff to enter annual leave requests, as well as directly record time and attendance into the payroll system.

Northland is among the first DHBs to set up a steering group of payroll staff and unions to oversee a process of sampling time sheets and looking at the payroll system to identify potential breaches of the Holidays Act. The review will take around 3 months.

Around 3000 current employees of the DHB and a further 3000 former employees are affected by issues that have already been identified, one of which is the way timesheets were entered into the payroll system.

Fixing problems identified in the review could take another 9 months, and any under-payments will be well into 2020. Calculation of arrears for all current and past employees will be go back to 1 May 2010.

Māori midwives in the news

Māori midwives are too few and spread too thinly across the country to handle rising Māori birth rates, and say a workforce strategy is desperately needed.

Nga Maia was quoted on Radio NZ this week saying there had been no Māori workforce strategy for the last two decades. Only 9 percent of all midwives are Māori, despite Māori babies making up more than 20 percent of those born every year.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) said in a statement to Radio NZ that its Maternity Action Plan had "specific actions" relating to increasing the Māori midwifery workforce, but did not say what those actions were.

The MoH said that as part of this years' Budget, Māori health undergraduate students would be supported with a \$10 million fund over four years which would provide them with wrap-around services.

The Midwifery Accord, spearheaded by MERAS, is tasked with developing a strategy to better support midwives in training, particularly Maori and Pasifika, and to developing a strategy for retention of the existing midwifery workforce, workforce development and succession planning, and the re-employment of those who have left the workforce

We are to report to the Minister of Health by the end of October 2019 so that agreed actions can be funded and implemented.

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