



MEDIA RELEASE

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Northland DHB Anaesthetic Technician Negotiations Fail

Despite optimistic signs at Northland DHB that a settlement between the DHB and its anaesthetic technicians was in sight, meetings earlier this week again failed to find a solution, with the DHB withdrawing all offers the following day.

APEX, the union representing anaesthetic technicians, lifted notice of strike action due to occur yesterday (Thursday October 11) as ongoing discussions with the DHB indicated settlement was close. This enabled the parties to concentrate on the bargaining, subsequently meeting on Wednesday this week. "Discussions at that time continued to be amicable, constructive and positive," says Dr Deborah Powell, National Secretary of APEX, "but unfortunately the next day and utterly out of the blue, the DHB withdrew its offer, leaving us high and dry."

"What transpired between the negotiations and the withdrawal of the offer is not clear to us," says Dr Powell, "but it certainly feels as if we are negotiating with a phantom, someone sitting outside the room making decisions unrelated to what is happening at the table."

APEX has invited NDHB back to mediation next week to see if negotiations cannot get back on a constructive footing. "If we can't, the risk is that industrial action will escalate," said Dr Powell.

ABOUT ANAESTHETIC TECHNICIANS

Anaesthetic Technicians are essential members of the surgical team. They work mainly in operating theatres, providing skilled assistance to the Anaesthetist. Anaesthetic Technicians check and maintain the anaesthetic machines and other related equipment, ensure appropriate equipment and drugs are available, assist with inserting airway devices and venous/arterial cannulas, and act as advocates for patients. While Anaesthetic Technicians work predominantly in operating theatres, they are called upon to work in any area where an anaesthetic may be given, including CT, MRI & radiology, ED & intensive care.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Dr Deborah Powell is available for comment on 021 614 040