

Pharmacy Newsletter

March 2021

Dear members,

The end of 2020 through early 2021 was a busy period for the Pharmacy Division of APEX. The highlight of this was the newly formed APEX Pharmacy Multiple Employer Collective Agreement (MECA) - congratulations to the teams at Hawkes Bay and Nelson Marlborough DHBs. This document is the first Pharmacy specific collective agreement covering Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians, Pharmacist Interns, and Pharmacy Assistants from more than one employer.

This, and other updates, are discussed below.

MECA

The formation of the MECA itself has been a milestone for your division. This is something we have been working on for several years. Being in a MECA makes you as a profession stronger, with more members across more locations uniting to try and achieve the same terms. We have more industrial power going forward and will be able to push harder for the conditions that are specific to DHB pharmacy workers.

There are several improved terms in this agreement including standardising hours of work and overtime allowances, as well as an immediate \$1200 increase on all salaries under \$100,000. A working group is also being formed to look at salaries and their application as well as working on a national merit progression criteria for pharmacy.



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CLINICAL PHARMACIST FACILITATORS

Clinical Pharmacist Facilitators employed by HBDHB have been offered a SECA by their employers after years of work to get them moved off individual employment agreements. This ratified today, with the group accepting a \$1200 increase on all salaries under \$100,000, an additional day's sick leave, fourteen weeks parental leave top-up payment, redundancy provisions, and a lump-sum payment.

APEX DELEGATES' TRAINING

After delays due to COVID, we had our in-person delegate training in Auckland last month. This was a great event attended by a number of your pharmacy delegates. We discussed common problems in workplaces, your role as a delegate, and some of the upcoming changes and challenges for all allied scientific health workforces following the Health and Disability Sector Review completed last year. We are hoping to have another training soon and are always keen to have more Pharmacy delegates. If you would like to be a delegate for your DHB, please [get in touch](#).



NEW PHARMACY DIVISION EXECUTIVE MEMBER

We would like to thank Brittney Young a pharmacist delegate from Canterbury DHB for stepping forward to fill the vacancy in our divisional leadership. She will join Louise Burnside, a pharmacist from Hawkes Bay DHB, at national executive and divisional council meetings.

IPANZ

The Independent Pharmacy Association of New Zealand has approached APEX about union membership for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working out in community pharmacies, and we are working with them to see how we maybe able to assist them and their members. From meetings we have had with their members their issues are not too different to the issues of pharmacy members working for DHB's, these unsurprisingly include salary, career progression and funding for CPD.

FUTURE

Just because we have settled the MECA does not mean the work stops. Over the course of the agreement, we are wanting to grow the MECA to cover more DHBs. This is where our members and delegates connections come in. You will all have connections across the profession, and we are asking you to use these connections to spread the word about the MECA. A subsequent parties clause in the MECA allows us to bring new DHBs into the MECA just by balloting the members at that DHB and does not require agreement from any of the employers. For those choosing to join the agreement, they would receive an immediate \$1200 increase on their salary if earning under \$100,000 per annum as well as the host of other benefits discussed above. Let your advocates in APEX know if you have any questions or contact you would like to pass on to us.

Similarly, the more members in more locations we have, the stronger the MECA is and our ability to negotiate better terms and conditions for the pharmacy profession. In particular at NMDHB and HBDHB, if your colleagues are currently not members of APEX let them know they can

join and receive the improvements you have achieved in the MECA settlement immediately.

PHARMACY AND PAY EQUITY

APEX has lodged a pay equity claim for Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians employed at DHBs, as part of a wider claim encompassing all our members working in majority female professions. Our claim is a part of a whole of Allied Scientific and Technical workforce claim, with Pharmacists being one of the "first cabs off the rank" to commence the interview process shortly. However, it is important to be realistic about what it can do and to note a few things.

Whilst the pay equity route is another 'string to the bow' of opportunities for improving pay, and for pharmacy technicians where they are grouped with unregulated as well as differing qualifications, there is definitely an opportunity to compare their salaries and whether they have been undervalued by a gender bias, that being said the process involves a long and what can be an arduous process and is arguably not going to be the primary method by which pharmacists and pharmacy technicians continue to improve pay and conditions now and in the near future.

Pay equity processes cannot be used to deliver other important conditions, like CPD funding and study leave or additional annual leave. It can only deliver pay, albeit that this can relate to all aspects of the pay packet including penal and overtime pay, and allowances. That means pay equity is not a short cut to a better contract overall.

So, a pay equity claim is on the table for DHB Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians and other DHB employed Allied Scientific and Technical Workforces APEX represents, but we should not hold our breath or even more, count our chickens before they hatch. The process in the Allied Health sector will be very complex and may take years to determine. APEX intends to be active in pursuing pay equity on behalf our female dominated professions. However, in the Pharmacy division we must not be too distracted by this long-term slow-burn and must concentrate our thinking on the 2021-2022 bargaining. That bargaining will be on us before we know it and will involve claims to improve all aspects of the MECA, not just pay. Check out the latest Pay Equity newsletter for updates!