

PHYSIOS



September 2018

WELCOME!

In addition to APEX's *TO THE POINT* journal, we thought it would be of value to you if we generated a semi-regular Physiotherapist Division Newsletter. So, welcome! If you have any questions or comments please email us at physio@apex.org.nz – we would love to hear from you.

2018 WORKPLAN

From now up until the end of the year (which is fast approaching...) negotiations are the priority (see below for bargaining updates). This is where our energy will be focused. However, APEX also wishes to increase our engagement with Physiotherapists – these targeted newsletters are a good place for us to start. It is important that you are empowered as employees, and to assist with this we are in the process of creating a SECA (Single Employment Collective Agreement) FAQs section on the Physiotherapist Division of the APEX website. This will be a great place for you to go to get clarification around your entitlements and to find quick answers to common questions and problems. So watch this space! Another piece of work we are going to do is a general comparison of our three current collectives (Northland DHB, Bay of Plenty DHB and Waikato DHB). We will carry out a preliminary investigation into a pay equity claim for Physiotherapists – this is not a straightforward matter by any means, but will be worth looking into.



BARGAINING UPDATE

Northland DHB

The NDHB SECA is currently in term and is not set to expire until October 2019. However, APEX has recently requested a variation to the agreement to help address the issue of increasing workload in the weekends, and the impact this is having on work-life balance of the Physiotherapists as well as being able to respond to service demand and patient care imperatives. We are in touch with members about amending current hours of work and associated provisions. We will have more to report in the next newsletter.

Bay of Plenty DHB

The BOPDHB SECA expired on 26 July 2018. We have met with the employers for bargaining twice now. We are set to meet for negotiations again next week on 3 October at Tauranga Hospital, and have scheduled a meeting with

the members (face to face and via video conference) afterwards, during which we will update you and discuss where to from here. We have yet to receive a formal offer from the employers.

Waikato DHB

The Waikato DHB SECA expired on 28 April 2018, and we have met with the employers for bargaining twice since then. We had a meeting with members following the last round of negotiations at Waikato Hospital to provide an update. We have not received a formal offer from the employers and we have a third date for bargaining tentatively set.

SECA FAQ: SICK LEAVE

DO I NEED TO PROVIDE A MEDICAL CERTIFICATE IF I TAKE SICK LEAVE?

You may be required to provide a medical certificate or other evidence of illness to the DHB. However, if you are sick/injured for less than three days and you are asked for proof then the DHB covers the cost of getting the proof e.g. visit to the doc. If you have queries about this let us know.



WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT REPORT

We're taking a look at the key findings of New Zealand's first ever [Physiotherapist workforce assessment](#). Even though Physiotherapists make up one of the largest DHB Allied Health workforces, Technical Advisory Services Ltd (TAS)'s April 2017 report was the first of its kind and remains highly relevant. Key findings of the report are given below.

The (slowly) changing face of the workforce

- We remain a majority female workforce (87.8% at April 2017), but there is an increasing number of males among new entrants and newly enrolled undergraduates.
- The under-representation of Maori and Pacific practitioners at only 2.7% remains an issue. The general population figures are around 22.5% and growing.

Growing demand

- Demand continues to grow, driven by an aging population presenting with a higher frequency of complex conditions, co-morbidity, and chronic illnesses. In particular, demand for community-

based care and pre-surgery assessments and physiotherapy as alternatives to orthopaedic surgery is growing.

Long-term shortages of experienced/specialist physios

- Compared to 2011, the mean length of service is up from 5.4 to 6.2 years.
- However, the DHBs (and especially the regional DHBs) report difficulty in recruiting experienced and specialist physiotherapists. This is a significant challenge given the demographic forces driving chronic conditions, complex trauma and neuro-rehabilitation.

Operational flexibility

- DHBs are also reporting a rise in

inter-discipline substitution as physiotherapists, particularly in community settings, take on tasks traditionally performed by occupational therapists and nursing staff. Likewise, we are seeing some low-level physiotherapy work being conducted by allied health assistants.

- This will be a space to watch – delegating more low-level physiotherapy tasks to allied workers could be one way in which the DHBs seek to free up specialist physiotherapy care to meet rising demand amid the ongoing long term skills shortage.

We look forward to hearing about your own experiences of change in your workplaces. Please contact us at physio@apex.org.nz

DELEGATE INTERVIEW: NIKKI LAKER

Your delegates do a fantastic job and APEX could most definitely not function as well as it does without them!



Nikki Laker, a National Executive member and delegate, recently spoke about leadership at the APEX delegate training held in Auckland. She is a natural leader and a true advocate for Physiotherapists. If

you have any questions for Nikki please do not hesitate to get in touch with her.

Where do you work and what do you do?

I have worked at Waikato Hospital for over 20 years as a physiotherapist. I work in acute paediatrics in the Neonatal Intensive Care and Paediatric Medical and Surgical wards. I work with babies through to 16 year olds. Mostly my focus is respiratory physiotherapy; however, I also provide mobility and rehabilitation interventions.

How did you become a Physio?

When I was in school I volunteered to help run a community programme working with children who had difficulties with

co-ordination and physical activities. I really enjoyed working with these kids, and pursued this in my career. Although the majority of physiotherapy training and rotations as a new graduate involve working with adults, I knew that my long-term aim was to work with children.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Working with children is challenging but so rewarding. I have a respiratory focus, and some of the children I work with are extremely unwell. It is a real privilege to work with families of these kids, and feel that my input can make a difference to them. Children are so resilient, and we can learn so much from them.

How did you come to be a delegate?

A small group of us took it upon ourselves to lead the change from "another union" who we were dissatisfied with. We knew that APEX represented the MRTs at Waikato and that they may be an option for us. We approached APEX, Dennis came to talk to us, and we became the first physios to join APEX. As someone driving the change, I naturally fell into a delegate role and also that of division president. I have changed from full time to part time in that time and have considered stepping down from the role but I care about the staff's rights too much to do so.

What is bargaining like?

I have been involved in many rounds of bargaining, and I enjoy the process. Because we are a SECA, we as delegates get to contribute quite a lot to this process. Over the years APEX has worked with us to better our terms and on the whole we have had positive outcomes. Our current contract has expired and with the climate as it is this may be a different story this time around! However, in saying that I'm sure we will work to present as favourable an outcome to our members as we are able.

What issues will the Physiotherapist workforce face in the future?

The main issue is the push towards a 7-day service in some inpatient areas. This is already happening in many DHBs, and with any new services or wards being opened, the expectation is for more allied health staff working longer hours across 7 days. Unfortunately, there continues to be a huge problem with staffing shortages throughout NZ, and so the push is being made without the staff to support it. As for so many professions in health, we struggle to provide a traditional Monday to Friday service. It's hard to see what the solution is to this problem – but more money would help, hahaha!

Thanks Nikki!