

21.08.2024

Mr. Gerard Hayes

Secretary

Health Services Union

Locked Bag 3

Australia Square NSW 1215

By email: secretary@hsu.asn.au

Dear Mr. Hayes

I am writing to inform you that NSW Health Pathology (NSWHP) is engaging with NSWHP staff, Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) staff and other key stakeholders to seek input into a proposed trial of an alternate model for our Mudgee Laboratory.

After initial discussions with WNSWLHD, the proposed six-month trial proposal for consideration involves:

- Extending hours of operation at Mudgee laboratory on weekdays from 8am to 5pm to 8am to 8pm and introducing a weekend shift from 8am to 5pm.
- Modifying the existing out-of-hours pathology service outside of these operating hours.
- Enhancing the Point of Care Testing (PoCT) service we provided at Mudgee by adding two new devices to assist with urgent and after-hours on-site testing. The new devices will be newly advanced full blood count technology - the PixCell Hemoscreen, and the Abbott Afinion 2 for CRP testing.
- Our on-site collection service will remain unchanged.

The majority of callbacks are currently experienced between 5pm and 8pm on weekdays and during the day on weekends and the new proposed hours of operation have been chosen to provide coverage during these times.

A modified out-of-hours call-back mechanism has been created in consultation with Mudgee Hospital's clinical teams to guide which circumstances require a call back. There will be no change to the current process for accessing the blood fridge or the emergency release of blood products.

It is expected these changes to out-of-hours procedures will see our laboratory staff called back to work on fewer occasions in appropriate circumstances while maintaining the quality service NSWHP and WNSWLHD provide to our patients within the region.

Through this trial, NSWHP expects to realise the following:

- Align laboratory operating hours to better match clinical demand and hospital activity
- Leverage advanced PoCT technology at the patient's bedside
- Minimise delays for critical results to inform patient care
- Improve staff well-being and work-life balance through changed rostering patterns and reduced after-hours interruptions from callbacks

- Increase education and competency with ongoing support for clinicians using PoCT technology
- Reduced unnecessary call-backs leading to a more astute management of budgets.

At the end of the trial NSWHP will be in a better position to evaluate whether these changes noted above are justified.

NSWHP remains committed to delivering the highest quality, most efficient and reliable public pathology services for the people of NSW regardless of where they live, and to support the growth, development and wellbeing of our staff across our network.

Please feel free to reach out to us with your thoughts or to schedule a meeting to discuss this proposal further by the close of business on 04.09.2024.

Thank you for your collaboration and engagement as we work towards providing enhanced pathology services to our communities. NSWHP will continue to consult with you throughout this pilot

Kind regards,

Dr Deanna Paulin

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