

MEDIA RELEASE

24 February 2016

People urged to save Wairau Hospital ED for emergencies only while flood clean-up underway

Nelson Marlborough CEO Chris Fleming is urging Marlborough residents to reserve visits to Wairau Hospital Emergency Department for emergencies only and to visit their GP or after-hours urgent medical centre instead.

This is the standard requirement, but is especially important today and for the next week while a clean-up is underway at the hospital after a water main was accidentally severed during construction work on site at approximately 2.45pm this afternoon.

A substantial amount of water leaked through ceilings into the HDU and ED departments before the water was closed off.

Mr Fleming says that no harm has been caused to any staff, patients or visitors. Patients in HDU and ED were immediately transferred into the in-patient and day-stay facilities.

He says that emergency generators are on stand-by, and a St John's tent will be erected outside of ED to provide needed capacity for ED patients while the ED space is affected.

"We are asking Marlborough residents to reserve visits to Wairau Hospital ED for emergencies only, and to visit their GP or after-hours urgent medical centre instead," Mr Fleming says.

Marlborough general practitioners are being informed about reduced ED and HDU capacity, and Nelson Hospital ED staff are being prepared for a potential increase in helicopter arrivals. This is because helicopter arrivals to the Wairau Hospital ED are being diverted to other hospitals, including Nelson.

Due to the surface water present and the damage to ceilings etc, the NMDHB is reviewing elective day activity for tomorrow (25 February). Some patients will need to be rescheduled and will be contacted directly.

Mr Fleming says that operating theatres and the radiology department are unaffected.

He says the situation is being monitored and that the clean-up will take at least two days. An investigation into how the water main was severed will occur.

Ends

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