

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Nelson Marlborough Health to reduce services during workers' strike

Nelson Marlborough Health (NMH) is preparing to close most hospital elective services on 12 July due a nationwide strike by nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants who are covered by the New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO) collective employment agreement.

The strike will occur from 7am Thursday 12 July until 7am 13 July.

Pamela Kiesanowski, Director of Nursing and Midwifery, says that patient safety is paramount in the lead-up to and during the strikes.

“Patient safety is our top priority and to achieve this, we will continue to operate essential services such as emergency departments, emergency surgery and maternity care throughout the strike. We do this in agreement with the NZNO to provide an essential number of nursing and midwifery staff needed to provide ‘life preserving services’.

“To prioritise patient safety by reducing the demand on our hospitals we also need to postpone non-urgent elective surgeries and outpatient appointments that were scheduled on the strike day.”

Mrs Kiesanowski says that affected patients will be contacted directly, and that people should come to their scheduled appointment unless they have been contacted to say their appointment is being postponed.

“We apologise in advance for the disruption this may cause but this is a necessary measure to ensure that we can concentrate on those that require urgent and emergency care during this period.

“We continue to acknowledge the right of our staff to choose whether to strike or not. We acknowledge that this is not an easy decision to make and that many staff will be feeling unsettled at this time.”

Mrs Kiesanowski urges people not to delay seeking medical treatment or going to hospital if they need urgent medical assistance. People should still:

- dial 111 or come to the hospital for emergencies
- visit the Medical and Injury Centre in Nelson and Urgent Care Centre in Blenheim for after-hours care
- contact their GP, local pharmacy or call Healthline on 0800 611 116 for non-urgent needs

The NMH website will have the most up to date notices about the strikes and effects on healthcare services [www.nmdhb.govt.nz](http://www.nmdhb.govt.nz)

Patients or other members of the public can also call NMH on 0800 733 372 to check the status of their appointment.

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