



Stat Report 2015/02

Professional doesn't mean a slave to excessive workloads

If you thought working through excessive workloads with insufficient staff is being professional, think again.

Being a medical scientist, a psychologist or a pharmacist, by the very nature of the professions and the work, of course means being a professional. It is an issue that often comes up when discussing workplace issues like increasing workloads and insufficient staff available to cover workloads.

Unfortunately when the work keeps piling up without the staff supported needed, it can create significant pressure. It can create situations where people get over-worked and neglect their own health because they have to plough through the work. Indeed whenever these sorts of issues are raised, without doubt there are some that insist people should be 'professionals'; that excessive workloads go with being a 'professional'.

It's not clear to us as to why raising issues about workloads is not being 'professional'.

What we can say about being 'professional' is that there is nothing professional in allowing your health to deteriorate because managements are refusing to manage staffing levels and workloads appropriately. There is nothing 'professional' about having excessive workloads because managements refuse to employ sufficient staff to do the work. And there is nothing 'professional' about working unpaid through meal breaks and before rostered starts or longer hours in order to get normal work done.

In fact, excessive workloads rob you of your ability to be professional.

When you are stressed and overworked errors can occur and mistakes can be amplified. Stress and being overworked can lead to serious health problems leading to increased time away from work. As you will know, errors and mistakes can make a major difference in a diagnosis or

treatment; or critically delay a diagnosis for urgent treatments to be established.

It's when you're stressed and overworked that you're most at risk of being unprofessional.

Excessive workloads are not about you and your level of professionalism; it's increasingly clear excessive workloads are about management refusing to properly manage staffing levels and workloads and ensuring the availability of sufficient staff to undertake the workload.

Remember: No Pay? No Way!

Universal Healthcare Still Under Threat

The Federal Government before the festive season made significant changes, albeit very quiet changes, to the rebates GPs receive for consultations. In particular, the one generating a lot of discussion is the cut to the rebate for short consultations.

Under a little-known "10 minute" rule predicted to blow out GP waiting times from January 19, Medicare will pay \$20.10 less for consultations lasting six to 10 minutes.

For years, Medicare has paid \$37.05 towards these "Level B" visits made by millions of patients each year requiring a new prescription or blood pressure check, for example. It will now pay \$16.95, a move doctors warn will "destroy" free universal healthcare.

The change means people who currently pay to see their GP will receive \$20.10 less back from Medicare for consultations up to 10 minutes, meaning their "out of pocket" cost or "gap fee" (the difference between what their doctor charges and what they receive back from Medicare) will increase.

Last financial year, about 35 million GP consultations, or 26 per cent of 134 million billed to Medicare, were under 10 minutes.

In the same year, the Australian Bureau of Statistics said one in five Australians who saw a GP said they waited longer than they felt was acceptable to get an appointment. One in 20 who needed to see a GP said they delayed it or did not go because of cost.

The change comes alongside a \$5 cut to all Medicare rebates for GP consultations that will apply to non-concessional patients from July 1. This means people without a concession who see a GP for less than 10 minutes from July, will receive a rebate of \$11.95.

[The Age](#) has provided this handy little summary of the changes:

Part-time Work and Public Holiday Entitlements

We've recently had enquiries from a couple of public sector members who work part-time about their entitlement to be paid for public holidays on days on which they are not required to work.

Clause 69.5 of the enterprise agreement deals with this and it's pretty straightforward:

If it's a day you would normally work, you get paid for the day. As simple as that.

If it's a day where you're not normally required to work, you get paid on a pro rata basis. How this works is outlined in clause 69.5.2 as follows:

Average weekly hours over the previous six months are to be determined and a pro-rata payment made, regardless of whether the employee would ever work on that day of the week.

Example:

Average Hours	Shift Length	Base Payment	Penalty	Payment
24/38 hours	<i>X 8 hours (Where the ordinary shift length is 8 hours)</i>	5.05 hours	T 1.0	5.05
20/38 hours	<i>X 10 hours (Where the ordinary shift length is 10 hours)</i>	5.26	T 1.0	5.26 hours

A practical example would be - say you normally work 3 days per week (being Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) and there's a public holiday on a Monday (such as Queens Birthday just recently). If the standard shift length in your workplace is 8 hours, you will get 5.05 hours pay for that day.

If you have any concerns or questions please get in touch with the Union on 9623 9623.

Join the campaign - No Pay? No Way!

Show your support for the campaign by downloading & using one of our graphics for your email signature.



Worth Reading: Senate report shows why Australia needs to talk about inequality

“Bridging our growing divide: Inequality in Australia is an important report tabled without fanfare in the Senate by its Community Affairs References Committee. The [report](#) is clearly argued and well-buttressed by data and references. The points it makes about an issue central to the kind of society we are developing in Australia deserve wide community discussion.

The inquiry [terms of reference](#) called for a review of the extent of income inequality, the rate at which it is increasing and its impacts on access to health, housing, education and work.

The senators were also asked to inquire into specific impacts on disadvantaged groups. These included the likely impact of government policies – especially 2014-15 budget measures – on rates of inequality, the principles that should underpin social security payments and practical measures that government could implement to address inequality.”

Read the entire piece by Robert Douglas on The Conversation at:

<http://theconversation.com/senate-report-shows-why-australia-needs-to-talk-about-inequality-36121>

Worth Reading: Most people support penalty rates for working unsociable hours, poll shows

“Eight out of 10 Australians agree that people who work outside normal business hours should be paid higher rates, the latest Essential poll shows.

That number is the same as when the poll was taken in May 2013, before Labor lost power in the federal election.

Nearly 70% of Coalition voters, and just over 90% of both Labor and Greens voters, said people who work shifts or on weekends should be given higher hourly pay.”

Read the entire article by Shalailah Medhora on The Guardian at:

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/jan/13/most-people-support-penalty-rates-for-working-unsociable-hours-poll-shows>

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