

21 October 2021

Crisis in our hospitals: survey of doctors reveals public hospitals at breaking point

NSW public hospitals are at breaking point and doctors are on the brink of breakdown, according to the findings of a survey of more than 800 of the state's senior doctors released today.

The survey of 813 senior doctors in public hospitals across the state conducted by ASMOF – the Doctors' Union – has found that:

- 76% of senior doctors report staff shortages in their department;
- 59% of senior doctors are working increased hours due to the COVID-19 crisis, with those affected working an average of 21 extra hours a week; and
- 85% of senior doctors are concerned about their fatigue levels and mental wellbeing due to the pandemic. A third of those were extremely concerned about their fatigue and wellbeing.

President of the ASMOF NSW - the Doctors' Union - Dr Tony Sara said the findings should act as a warning to new Premier, Dominic Perrottet as he charts the next steps in the NSW Government's pandemic response.

"The Premier must listen to the advice of the Chief Health Officer Kerry Chant and our frontline medical staff to ensure we are able navigate our way through this pandemic safely," Dr Sara said.

"Our patients deserve to have their health prioritised, and the medical staff who have been working tirelessly through this pandemic deserve a break.

"Our doctors are working unbelievable hours in order to help NSW get through this pandemic, with little to no recognition or support.

"Our public health doctors, ICU doctors and medical administration doctors are among those doing it toughest at the moment, but everyone is feeling the impact including surgery, anaesthetics, physicians, paediatrics, psychiatry and ED doctors. Our doctors will always do everything it takes to keep the community safe, but at the moment everything is at breaking point.

"Not only do doctors deserve recognition for the incredible amount of work they're doing at the moment, but we also need to be very careful that decisions made by government don't exacerbate an already dangerous situation.

"Another surge would put even more pressure on our hospitals and medical staff who are already on the brink of burnout."

The survey was conducted in September 2021 and includes senior doctors across specialities including, but not limited to, Intensive Care, Emergency, Public Health Medicine, General Practice, Surgery, Anaesthesia, Paediatrics, Psychiatry.

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