

Cromwell Medical Centre News

Special Edition

PROPOSAL TO CUT AFTER HOURS MEDICAL SERVICES FOR CROMWELL

Please read carefully

This article affects all Cromwell Basin residents and contains important information about proposed changes

WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION?

For more than 30 years Cromwell Medical Centre has provided after hours medical care to the Cromwell community. At present we deal with between 25 and 50 cases per week outside of normal practice hours. The number of calls is increasing as the local population grows. There are a significant number of young children and elderly patients who require after hours care and this includes home visits as well as support care to Ripponburn Rest Home.

Cromwell currently has a doctor on call 24 hours per day, every day of the year. If you call our after hours service you will ALWAYS get to speak directly to one of our doctors. We do not use call centres or phone triage services.

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED CHANGES?

It is proposed that the existing Cromwell based on call service will be substituted by an after hours service based at Dunstan Hospital that will cover (with a single GP) Cromwell Basin, Alexandra Basin and Roxburgh District. This new service is proposed to commence 1 October 2015. Please note that this Dunstan Hospital based clinic will not be free and will not involve hospital resources.

HOW WILL THE CHANGES AFFECT THE CROMWELL COMMUNITY?

Cromwell is a growing town with five new classrooms to be built this year due to substantial increases in school rolls. We are seeing the same pattern at the medical centre with significant growth in patient numbers. It therefore seems a curious decision to withdraw local, Cromwell based after hours services.

If you have an emergency after hours and you live in Cromwell you will need to travel to Dunstan Hospital or alternatively call an ambulance. If you call an ambulance it is unlikely that there

will be a Cromwell based doctor to support the wonderful team at St. John. The same can be said for the other emergency services. As part of our PRIME contract we attended more than 100 emergency call outs to support St. John over the past year.

From 1 October 2015 if the call out is out of hours there will no longer be an on call doctor based in Cromwell providing support to the St. John ambulance team on duty. The ambulance will need to take you to the doctor based in Dunstan Hospital clinic.

JOINT STATEMENT FROM THE GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AT THE CROMWELL MEDICAL CENTRE

"We have collectively decided to vote "No" to the creation of a combined on call rural GP service that would amalgamate services that are currently provided separately by Cromwell, Alexandra and Roxburgh GPs.

The key to our decision was a lack of detail provided on the proposed venture and the short time frame for its implementation (1 October 2015). There has been a clear lack of meaningful engagement with all stakeholders and no solution offered as to the effect on St. John PRIME (medical response) services in Cromwell.

Our Cromwell community stands to lose its current after hours services from 1 October 2015. The proposal states that there will be a single GP based out of a clinic at Dunstan Hospital to cover Cromwell Basin, Alexandra Basin and Roxburgh District. In our opinion this has the potential to significantly reduce the level of after hours care offered to Cromwell residents.

We also have concerns around the lack of community involvement in this proposed change to after hours care. The Ministry of Health Consultation Guidelines 2002 state:

"Another fundamental principle is the importance of community engagement and consultation on health services to ensure quality decision making and policy development in health."

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

If you are unhappy about the proposed changes to after hours care in Cromwell, we encourage you to contact one of the following:

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