

7<sup>th</sup> October 2013

## **IAEM warns of service disruption during tomorrow's NCHD strike**

The Irish Association for Emergency Medicine supports the long overdue implementation of the European Working Time Directive (EWTD) which sets limits on the hours of work of medical staff; particularly non consultant hospital doctors (NCHDs). Because of shift systems used for many years in Emergency Departments (EDs) and notwithstanding difficulties most EDs have in achieving a full complement of medical staff in recent years, most EDs are already broadly compliant with the directive.

During the Irish Medical Organisation's planned day(s) of action, it is intended that EDs are staffed at Sunday staffing levels and will be supported by Sunday levels of staffing by in-house medical teams. Sunday is traditionally a relatively quiet day and ED medical staffing levels generally reflect this. Weekdays, particularly Monday, Tuesday and Friday are considerably busier and therefore Sunday levels of staffing are unlikely to be adequate to manage patient demand, inevitably resulting in delays for patients.

It is important for the public to realise that while emergencies will continue to be managed during any industrial action, there will be disruption to services and delays for patients. These delays are most likely to affect those with non life- or limb-threatening conditions.

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