



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 25 January 2013

SA Health bed closures result in Nurses applying bans to protect patient safety

As of noon today, Nurses within Margaret Tobin Centre and the Flinders Medical Centre Emergency Department will commence bans after SA Health implemented bed closures, contrary to previous commitments.

Margaret Tobin Centre holds 38 beds. The bed closures introduced by SA Health reduce the bed numbers to 34.

Nurses are applying the bans to circumvent the bed closures in an effort to protect the interests of Mental Health patients and the South Australian community.

On Monday 21 January 2013, 4 beds were closed at Margaret Tobin Centre, despite clear commitments provided by SA Health Representatives that no such action would occur until further evidence and consultation relating to the safe closure of such beds had taken place.

"The behaviour of SA Health is incomprehensible. It is now virtually impossible for nurses to have confidence that agreements reached with SA Health through good faith discussions will be adhered to," said Adj Assoc Professor Elizabeth Dabars, ANMF (SA Branch) CEO/Secretary.

"It is our concern that the closure of these further beds will exacerbate an already overwhelmed Emergency Department and further block access to vital services for those most in need."

"On one hand, SA Health states it wants to enter into discussions with a view to reaching agreement. At the same time, SA Health has reneged on the very commitments that are essential to productive discussions - certainty over patient safety."

"From noon today, the bans will be applied. The bans mean that mental health patients requiring admission to hospital will not remain within the FMC ED or await placement on the Southern Mental Health Bed List. Instead, Nurses will transfer patients to the Margaret Tobin Centre."

"It is our expectation that the beds that were closed earlier this week will be re-opened and staffed in order to provide appropriate care for mental health patients. That is, if Margaret Tobin Centre has no "vacant" beds", current unfunded beds will be opened and safe staffing levels will be provided."

Nurses will reconvene on Wednesday 30 January 2013 to consider further action if necessary.

**Media enquiries contact: Adj Assoc Elizabeth Dabars
CEO/Secretary , ANMF (SA Branch)**