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# ‘We have lost confidence and trust’: Six health centre staff resign en masse after meeting goes wrong

[Madeleine James](#) | [Manawātū Standard](#)

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# 'I can't ethically stay ... no one's listening': Pahiatua nurses quit

VIDEO CREDIT: WARWICK SMITH

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Staff from the Pahiatua Medical Centre met with OmniHealth managing director Mark Willis on Monday after [they threatened to resign last week](#) if staffing shortages were not addressed.

Registered nurse Mark Emmerson spoke to a supporting crowd of around 50 after the meeting.



Katherine Howland, left, is joined by other residents concerned about the decline in health care in Pahiatua.

Photo: Warwick Smith / Manawatū Standard

“We have made our concerns very clear. We have told them about the pressures facing the workforce and the ongoing staff shortages.

“We have lost confidence and trust that OmniHealth can restore the level of primary healthcare that our community needs and deserves.”

Emmerson was the first to resign mid-meeting, shortly after followed by Victoria Perry, a member of the College of Nurses Aotearoa (NZ).

“I can’t ethically stay ... no one's listening,” Perry said.

Emmerson went on to explain that the group had provided their four weeks' notice, and their final day in their current positions would be Friday, October 16.



OmniHealth managing director Mark Willis.

Photo: Warwick Smith / Manawātū Standard

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Willis was asked for his opinion on the mass resignation.

“I think we are very disappointed to see that people are deciding to resign. We are open to them not resigning if they want to change their minds.”

He was then asked about the future of the clinic after October 16, and was at first confused about the significance of the date before he went on to explain that there had been no formal resignations.

“I would hope that people would give some careful thought to serving this community.”



Tararua Health Group nurse Mark Emmerson spoke to supporters and protesters after the meeting, telling them staff had resigned.

Photo: Warwick Smith / Manawātū Standard

Willis did not speak to the crowd; rather, he waited until they dissipated before finally leaving.

Emmerson told the supporters in his speech that he understood the impact that the resignations would have on the patients.

“This is not about abandoning our community, it's about standing up for it.

“We also have a responsibility to speak up when we believe the current situation is no longer sustainable ... we believe that continuing

under the current circumstances could result in further harm to our patients, our community and our workforce.”



The Pahiatua community makes its presence felt with the silent protest outside the beleaguered health centre.

Photo: Warwick Smith / Manawātū Standard

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The announcement was met with sobs from supporters.

Katherine Howland, a local from Pahiatua, believed if the health centre was to close it would be to the detriment of the community.

“There are many who cannot drive and are unable to get to other medical centres.”

Another local, Jill Woods, said there was no care or respect for the staff.

“I'd like to see the staff better supported and respected for the work that they do, and they need more staff to actually do the work that's required of them.”

An American company, OmniHealth, owns the Tararua Health Group. With 72 staff having resigned over the past two years, and another three GPs leaving over the next three weeks, this means 81 staff have resigned from the Tararua Health Group in total.

*Madeleine James is a student journalist from NZ Broadcasting School.*

- Manawatū Standard

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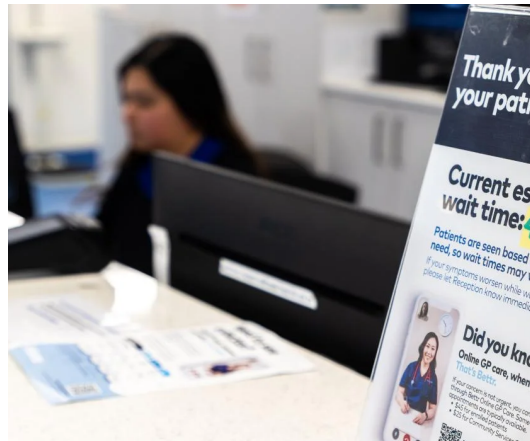
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