

# Senior Medical Officer Workforce Factsheet

April 2025

## Key Senior Medical Officer (SMO) workforce stats<sup>1</sup>

- 6,347 individuals employed, with an FTE of 5,448
- Overall FTE increased by 89 FTE between December 2023 (5,359 FTE) to 5,448 at December 2024.

Average wage and remuneration including allowances / overtime / penal rates	
Ave. Base FTE Salary (excluding additional salary payments for shift work, being on-call and superannuation)	\$254,500
Ave. Additional Payments (salary related and non-salary related remuneration)	\$70,500
<b>Sub Total – FTE Remuneration</b>	<b>\$325,000</b>
Ave. Employer Super Payment	\$18,500
<b>Ave. Total FTE Salary Package</b>	<b>\$343,500</b>

- SMOs receive a base salary that reflects their level of experience, agreed at the time of job offer. They progress up a 15-step pay scale each year.
- The SMO Association of Salaried Medical Specialists (ASMS) collective agreement is a “minimum rates” document. Additional terms and conditions have been negotiated nationally, locally, by specialty or department, and/or individually.

## Wage increases over time

SMO salaries have increased significantly over time. The base mid-salary step (Step 8) for senior doctors grew by 41% between 2009 and 2024 – an increase of \$66,361.

Bargaining for the Collective Agreement was settled in November 2023, resulting in average base salary for SMOs increasing by 7.29%.

## Current collective agreement negotiations

The current collective agreement expired on 31 August 2024, with discussions between Health NZ and ASMS underway since then. In late April 2025 Health NZ made an offer to ASMS in mediation. The offer was then rejected by ASMS.

The offer aimed to restore the gap between junior doctors and senior doctors’ salaries to help attract and retain our newly qualified SMOs by removing the three lowest pay steps.

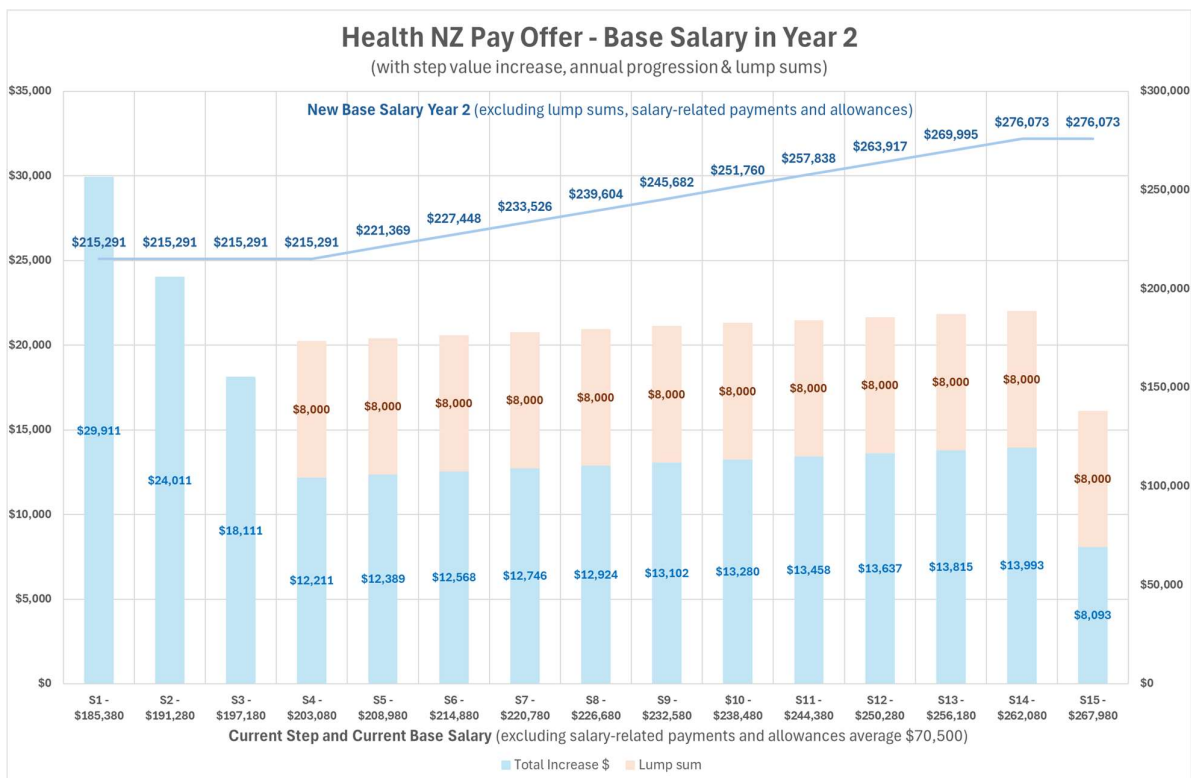
<sup>1</sup> December 2024

It included a recruitment and retention allowance in hard to staff districts to assist in attracting and retaining senior doctors in areas with the greatest challenges, including Tairāwhiti, Northland, MidCentral and Nelson-Marlborough.

### How senior doctors would have benefited from the offer

- A first-year specialist would receive a \$17,700 (9.5%) increase on base salary due to removal of steps 1-3. All other salary related remuneration (e.g. KiwiSaver) would increase by 9.5% as well. In the following year, this specialist would receive a \$12,211 (6.0%) base salary increase due to step progression and a 2% increase on Step 5.
- A second-year specialist would receive a \$11,800 (6.2%) pay increase on base salary. All other salary related remuneration (e.g. KiwiSaver) would increase by 6.2% as well. In the following year, this doctor would receive a \$12,211 (6.0%) base salary increase due to step progression and a 2% increase on Step 5.
- Under the April offer senior doctors higher up the pay scale would have gained 1% and 2% increases for Steps 4-15 in 2025 and 2026 respectively, alongside progression pay increases. They would also have received lump sum payments totalling \$8000 in 2025 and 2026.
- A new annual allowance of \$25,000 (FTE) for all SMOs in Tairāwhiti, Mid-Central, Nelson-Marlborough, Northland was offered to support recruitment and retention in these areas.

The following graph shows what the Health NZ offer would have delivered as a total increase and value by current step.



## Further Information on pay and conditions

### **Breakdown of allowances / overtime / penal rates**

- There are a range of additional allowances including but not limited to:
  - on-call availability and call backs
  - evening, night and weekend penal rates
  - recruitment and retention, and
  - special contribution.
- These additional allowances are paid on top of base salary, vary by location and service, and are often not specified in the collective agreement.
- Specified in the collective agreement is:
  - Continued Medical Education (CME) allowance of \$16,000 allowance per year (pro-rated for part time employees).

### **Leave**

- Six weeks annual leave per year.
- Two weeks (10 days per year) Continued Medical Education (CME) leave.
- Unspecified sick leave.
- Long service leave (2 weeks every 10 years).
- Onerous duties leave (5 days per year).
- Fully paid sabbatical leave of three months after every six years of service.

### **Other additional payments /benefits**

- Up to 6% matching superannuation contribution.
- Six weeks of fully paid parental leave when taking parental leave.
- Reimbursement of actual and reasonable costs relating to annual practicing certificates, other necessary licences, Medical Protection Society membership or an agreed alternative, vocational registration fees, and college membership fees.
- Moving and transfer expenses.