



Extract from Hansard

Wednesday, 20 March 2024

HEALTH SYSTEM (QUESTION TIME)

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (14:55): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister update the house on policies to improve the health system and any recent feedback from senior clinicians?

The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner: The dumbest policies since Transforming Health.

The SPEAKER: Order! Minister.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:55): Thank you to the member for Light for his question. I particularly note the very recent opening of the new emergency department at Gawler hospital, which has already seen a significant additional capacity in his local region and some of the first of our 150 beds to come online through the course of this year.

As the member asked about the health policies, we have a very comprehensive suite of health policies that we are delivering to the people of South Australia—and this stands completely opposite to the absolute zero health policies put forward by our political opponents—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, members to my left and right! Minister.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —chief of which is creating additional capacity in our hospital system. Today, the Premier and I saw the progress at the Lyell McEwin Hospital, where we are building an additional 48 beds as part of this government's commitment to expand our hospital system. Those beds are on track to be open and staffed in September this year, providing much-needed additional capacity for the health system. That

is part of a suite of policies covering everything from additional inpatient beds to additional mental health beds. A key part of the blockages that we face in our emergency departments is people not being able to get a mental health bed when they need it. There are over 100 additional mental health beds being delivered across the city and state as part of our plan.

Of course, it's not just the city where we are investing in our hospitals, we are also upgrading country hospitals as well, with very significant upgrades going into hospitals such as Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, Kangaroo Island, Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Whyalla: critical upgrades to those local services that have been ignored previously. We are making sure that we are delivering for people not just in the city but those critical upgrades in the country as well.

We have put in place, just in recent weeks, upgrades to our pharmacy services. People are now able to get access to three 24-hour pharmacies across the metro region. These have been very well received in the Salisbury, Clovelly Park and Norwood areas, with many people utilising those services other than having to go to an emergency department. We have also expanded the scope of services that pharmacists can do, to enable them to assist with UTIs to provide those medications when people would otherwise have to go to an emergency department because they couldn't get access to a GP.

Of course, we have policies to expand the new women's and kids' hospital and put that on a bigger site with many more beds. All of these policies were paid close

attention in some feedback from a senior clinician this morning, who wrote a letter outlining their thoughts in relation to the policies of this government versus the policies of those opposite. It was in the paper this morning from Professor Warren Jones, who is—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —no historical friend of the Labor Party.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: He says:

[The Malinauskas] mid-term government is in the process of injecting massive and unprecedented funds and resources into the health and hospital systems.

Ambulance response times are more critical than ramping and these have been halved since the Liberals left office. As the influx of hospital beds and staff escalates later this year, ramping will surely diminish.

Any comparison with a meaningless resignation promise by David Speirs is trivial and spurious. And he will surely be protected from any criticism of broken promises, since he has no health policies.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!