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## Queensland doctors call for active role in new health policies

Queensland doctors are urging the Palaszczuk Government to involve frontline clinicians in the introduction of its election health promises to ensure well-intentioned policies deliver practical improvements to patient care.

Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President, Professor Chris Perry, congratulated the government on its resounding re-election at last weekend's state poll but said real improvements to the healthcare system could only be realised when doctors at the coalface were part of the process.

"We welcome the State Government's plan to boost recruitment of doctors and health workers and to build seven satellite hospitals across south-east Queensland to take the pressure off hospital emergency departments," Prof. Perry said.

"But doctors need a better understanding of the sorts of care they'll be expected to provide at these facilities and how the government intends to improve access and services for rural and remote Queenslanders.

"Likewise, the \$28.5 million a year in palliative care funding promised by the Labor Government falls far short of the \$277 million needed, so frontline specialists need to be integrally involved in how that funding is spent to ensure patients get the most benefit from the limited resources."

Professor Perry said AMA Queensland released an *11-Point Action Plan – The Pathway to Better Health for Queenslanders* in the lead up to the state election to highlight key areas most in need of improvement across the public health system.

"We proposed allowing private GPs to work in rural hospitals, providing extra training for rural generalists and calling on rural Hospital and Health Services to cover the accommodation costs of visiting doctors as affordable and practical ways to improve healthcare in rural and remote communities but neither major party responded to this call," he said.

Professor Perry said it was vital for the re-elected State Government to invest in the expansion of a wellbeing program for all junior doctors in light of a recent report card that found half of Queensland's trainee doctors feared they would make a clinical mistake because of fatigue from working exhaustively long hours.

"Given the extra hours and effort that doctors and other healthcare workers have invested during COVID, it is crucial we ensure every young doctor has the support they need to prevent burn out, anxiety and depression in the first five years of practice," he said.

"It's a no-brainer if we want the next generation of doctors to be able to provide top quality patient care."

[cont.]

The AMA Queensland action plan also called for:

- \$3m to boost primary care for opioid misuse
- \$26m to improve pain management services
- \$313m to ensure the successful roll out of ehealth technologies
- \$7.57m to boost maternity services in rural and regional communities
- \$3m to reduce community-based alcohol-related harm and violence
- \$4.2m to improve the health of First Nations Queenslanders with a safe and culturally safe appropriate hospital network
- \$1.67m to improve doctors' mental health and workplace wellbeing.

“More needs to be done to ensure our public system meets the demand for care and for Queenslanders to have equal access to quality healthcare and services, regardless of where they live,” Professor Perry said.

“We look forward to working with Premier and Health Minister to ensure that limited resources are invested where they are needed most and that well-intentioned policies are transformed into improved healthcare for Queenslanders.”

Read AMA Queensland's 11-Point action plan: [HERE](#)

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

**Chiara Lesevre, AMA Queensland – 0419 735 641**

**Barbara Cox, Sequel PR - 0403 090 913.**