



MEDIA COMMENT

Sunday 19th May 2019

STATE WIDE WINTER INFLUENZA PLAN WELCOMED

With the winter flu season upon us and our emergency departments across the State already stretched, AMA Tasmania Vice President, Dr. John Davis welcomed the release of the government's Winter Demand Management Plan.

Dr. Davis said, "it is crucial for the government to have a plan in place to deal with the threat of influenza on the community and hospitals; however, we were disappointed that the AMA was not consulted on the strategy.

"While the plan, overall, is welcome and much needed, as a key stakeholder, AMA Tasmania should have been consulted.

"For instance, while AMA is supportive of the measures to encourage all Tasmanians to be immunised and for vulnerable Tasmanians to be immunised free of charge, we believe GPs are the best and safest option for people to receive their vaccination.

"We do not support pharmacists administering the vaccine as we believe doctors are best placed to care for a patient should the patient suffer an adverse reaction.

"We support the measures to keep elderly people in their homes or aged care facilities with GP and nursing care brought to them rather than being moved to the hospital unless necessary.

"This will help to reduce demand in the emergency departments and for hospital beds as well as reduce the likelihood of the patient picking up other infections in the hospital environment and becoming sicker.

"We also support better patient flow procedures being followed through to get patients the care they need promptly and discharged as soon as possible to free up a bed for the next patient.

"However, we are very concerned that there are no new beds within our hospitals being opened to deal with the inevitable increase in demand.

"All of our hospitals are already in crisis mode or close to because of increasing demand on their services and bed block within the hospitals.

"You only have to look at the ambulances that continue to be ramped in Hobart and Launceston and the stress on our doctors and nurses in our emergency departments to see more beds are required.

"The answer to the problem must include more hospital beds being opened at all acute hospitals, and not just at the Mersey."

ENDS

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