

SUBMISSION FOR WA HEALTH DEPT SUSTAINABLE HEALTH REVIEW

Dr Doug McCarthy

AGED CARE

Politicians pay lip service to the issue of an ageing population but they are blissfully unaware of the magnitude of the problem. In one generation people are now living 10 years longer but that extra 10 years has been at huge costs to health expenditure. Lifetime costs of one individual's health care is more than doubling from that extra 10 years of life. Put another way, a 90 year old takes up more health resources than 100 19 year olds. There are regularly 3 or more 90 yr old patients in Peel Health Campus Emergency Dept seeking treatment on any given day which was unheard of when the hospital started 19 years ago. Even increasing the health budget by 10% a year will simply be swallowed up by the effects of the " Grey Tsunami" if we continue to offer unlimited care to everybody.

Solutions

1. Better care in Care Facilities. Better remuneration for Doctors. Better transport options for radiology and specialist appointments. Improve the ability to be cared for in the home when ill.
2. Financial penalties for Care facilities "dumping" patients to Emergency Depts reducing their costs at great expense to the taxpayer. If the facility is not looking after them , they should not be paid to be looking after them.
3. Compulsory Advanced Health Directives for every person entering a Care Facility
4. Mandatory requirement for all patients over 75 attending their GP for their yearly Care Plan to have an Advanced Health Directive review as part of that plan.
5. This one is Controversial... Legislate that all people with Severe Dementia be offered only Palliative Care and no life prolonging treatment unless the family are willing to pay for the cost of that treatment. This one single act would save \$millions. Peoples lives are often prolonged due to family inertia and Care Facility protocols. (we treat our animals more humanely) and I am in no way suggesting Euthanasia, just better care.
6. Train more Geriatricians. There are nowhere near enough being trained.
7. Train G.Ps better in Aged Care. A diploma resulting in better medicare rebates would be ideal.
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MENTAL HEALTH

I will get straight to the point. Public mental health services in WA are abysmal and have been since the 1980s. The work productivity of an individual public mental health employee ,on average, is so bad that you could sack the worst 25% and nobody would notice. It needs a massive shake up and restructure. Temporary contracts with performance reviews would be a good start.

LOCAL ISSUE

Peel Health Campus is now woefully inadequate to provide health services to the region. In the last 19 years the population has more than doubled and aged dramatically. The hospital has not had one extra bed built by the government (the small community funded Paediatric ward doesn't count)

Elderly patients with Pneumonia can often wait 48 hours in the Emergency Dept on a trolley because an inpatient bed on the ward is not available. The need for hospital expansion is urgent !!

It has no ICU, HDU or CCU so sick patients are managed in the chaotic ED and transfer of patients to a tertiary hospital is made difficult . Waiting for the private contract to run its course in over 3 years from now without expansion now would be a grave mistake on the governments part.

A new ward could be added on to the facility in the next few months at low cost and disruption to it.

Dr Doug McCarthy