
I have Multiple Sclerosis and as such my mobility is limited and I rely on crutches and an electric scooter for my mobility. In December I fell and dislocated my right shoulder and have since had two further subluxations and dislocations to the shoulder now necessitating a full shoulder reconstruction.

I was referred to an orthopaedic surgeon at the beginning of January but the earliest appointment I was able to get was in August which meant that I would be unable to manage many of my self-care and daily activities of living for eight months.

The lengthy delay in getting an appointment is due to the funding cuts affecting West Gippsland Hospital and the closure of its operating theatre and some of its beds meaning that the surgery lists have been slashed.

This is having a profound effect on my MS and general health as with my shoulder out of action I am in effect immobilised and now housebound. I am also a single mother and life is becoming nigh on impossible.

I rely on mobility aids and managing one handed makes walking very dangerous and in early February I had a bad fall resulting in a further dislocation of my shoulder and further damage. Initially the injury was only a tendon tear which could have been relatively easily and less expensively repaired but now I will be needing a full shoulder reconstruction which is far more costly surgery and which will also involve far more rehab and post-op physio costs. Whilst the Victorian Government may argue that they are "saving" money with the cuts I would argue they are false savings as had I had my surgery in a timely manner I would be costing the Victorian health system far less over all.

Because of the increasing level of compounded disability I am also needing more assistance at home and this comes from a Department of Health's Disability Individual Support Package. But because I am needing more assistance than originally budgeted for I am needing to draw on emergency funding, again costing the Government more money..... savings???? Really, Mr David Davis?

Although the Federal Government has cut funding mid way through a financial year Victoria is the only State Government that has passed these cuts directly onto the health service providers. Other States have absorbed the cuts. And on top of this the Victorian government has also implemented hefty cuts of their own. The Victorian system is buckling under the double whammy of the Federal cuts and the State cuts. And it the patients, the public patients who can't afford private care, who are suffering.

My 13 year old daughter recently required urgent surgery with the same surgeon I have been referred to and at her post-op check up last week he noticed my arm in its sling and took pity on me and saw me at my daughter's appointment. I have now been classified as a Category 2 patient at the West Gippsland Hospital but I have been squeezed in on the absolute deadline of the 90 days allowed for the waiting time as there are no beds and the theatre lists have been slashed so badly thanks to the funding cuts. If a category 1 emergency comes up I will be bumped and will fall outside the Category 2 limit.

However if my daughter had not required surgery I would still be waiting until August just for the initial consultation. The impact on individual's

health cannot be over emphasised. These cuts are not truly cost effective and are endangering people's health and worsening people's conditions.

I have also included a link to the 7.30 Report aired on the ABC on Tuesday 12 February to elaborate on my position.

<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2013/s3688997.htm>

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