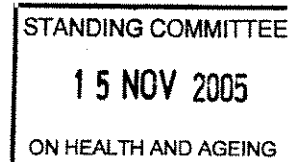


  
04 OCT 2005

Mr. Peter Lindsay MP  
Federal Member for Herbert  
PO Box 226  
AITKENVALE  
QLD 4814



Dear Peter,

Re: Inquiry into Health Funding

As a single self-funded retiree, I am perhaps not the best person to comment on this issue. However, I do have an opinion on the woes that appear to be happening not only in our hospitals but throughout Australia. I am also old enough to remember when the Queensland health system was the envy of all other states.

I believe a lot of the problem is not so much beds in hospitals but staff to man them. I am also a believer in not only a National Medicare system but a National Hospital System which is not always a popular idea. Australia has a small population and because of our geography should never in my opinion grow beyond the sustainable 25 million mark. It is ridiculous that we have so many state hospital systems as well as education systems in this country. We need to nationalise our schools, roads, hospitals, police and emergency services so that we have a national approach to health security and education.

The idea of a basic levy for hospitals, not unlike Medicare, to be supplemented by individuals for the added benefits they require at certain stages of their lives. Politicians must start believing in the fact that the majority of Australian workers do not mind paying for good health. Think of the numbers who give every year to the heart foundation, the cancer foundation and every other health charity, they would not object to a levy. This government has done a lot towards lowering taxes, on the whole, in relation to income. People will relate to less lowering in some areas if offset by an increase for health, an issue that most Australians are now concerned with and with the silent majority about to become the largest voting block, health will be a big issue with them. In Queensland, in particular, the war babies and the boomers remember good education and health systems and no doubt would like to see a return to the same for their grand children and great grand children and most of them will be voters for the next 15 to 20 years.

The current 30 per cent rebate should be graded throughout the employment years or the age one is most likely to need medical attention. There should be a bonus system perhaps and this could even be looked at for Medicare. For too many years now people have been overloading the health system by going to doctors for any snuffle. Our children's immune systems are ruined by the time they are 3 years old because they have been pumped with antibiotics from birth and this causes more serious problems later on.

Could we look at courses for new parents, like pre-natal, it could be managing your child's health from 1 to 6. Maybe the increased costs are a result of childcare centres where young children pick up everything. What studies are being done in this area? It would certainly be a reason for mother's to stay at home longer while their children are young. Has a survey been done to show the difference in health problems between children who have had home care from birth to 4 or 5 and those who have gone into child care much earlier?

The same criteria could be used for the elderly. Do the elderly have less health issues if they remain in their home environment longer? Perhaps the issue of bad health could be looked at more closely.

As far as the doctor shortage goes we have to really look at bonds for doctors so that they go into the rural and regional areas and dare I say a tax incentive for doctors in these regions.

Health is a costly issue but it must be attacked from all sides. For example, healthy children make healthy adults. Fitness must come back into schools as it was in the past. The elderly must be helped to have active lives too and this may mean the government spending more on associations that provide not only activities for the elderly but companionship.

To sum up, I believe the Federal Government must control health. They must not only provide more than half the money, but direct where it is spent. Local government should play a part in the provision of community based activities that ensure good health for young and old. Prevention is better than cure.

State Governments must start using their GST revenue in the areas agreed to. The Federal Government must have more control over where the funds are allocated in relation to GST.

All Queenslanders outside the SE corner wonder where their GST is being spent. There needs to be federal control on the salaries of the medical profession this will help to ensure that doctors and nurses go where they are needed not where they earn most money. This may mean more subsidies to specialists in remote and regional areas. State Governments could lower stamp

duty on doctors housing, lower their utilities. Everyone needs to start looking outside the square to fix this mess.

I have not commented in order of the terms of reference but in an overall manner as most people think of our hospital system in relation to either themselves or their immediate family or friends.

I have heard good and bad about our local hospital just as I have about our private hospitals. One section of government must do something soon as it is ridiculous to think that a nation that has produced some of the best medical brains in the world, pioneered with other nation's medical practices that are world class cannot successfully run the hospitals for a nation of this size.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marion O'Shea".

Marion O'Shea