



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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27 May, 2014

Scalpel to Medicare mobilises community angst

Nurses, midwives, doctors, healthcare workers, industry experts, university students and concerned citizens will gather in Sydney this evening over the proposed changes to Australia's universal health care system.

Mobilised by their opposition towards any dismantling of Medicare, the group will discuss impacts of the Abbott Government's \$7 co-payment for GP visits, diagnostic and pathology services. The forum will also canvas planned increases to the cost of pharmaceuticals, as well as the billions of dollars in public hospital funding cuts.

Acting General Secretary of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA), Judith Kiejda, will speak at the forum and highlight additional pressures facing the State's already strained public hospitals if the Budget measures succeed through federal parliament.

"With an ageing population and chronic illness on the rise, it is beyond belief that the Abbott Government wants to create a barrier for those in our community who desperately need access to primary care," Ms Kiejda said.

"Nurses and midwives across NSW agree that access to adequate health care is the right of every Australian and they believe Medicare is the most efficient way to distribute health resources.

"The Coalition's attempt to unravel Medicare is ideologically driven and would result in rising social inequity.

"We will continue to call upon representatives in the Senate to oppose the Abbott Government's ruthless attack on universal health care and the need to preserve equality.

"Rather than trying to eliminate universal health care, the government needs to take a serious look at the benefits of a Robin Hood tax (or Financial Transaction Tax) to raise future revenue – a small levy specifically on the trades in derivatives, shares and bonds which would not impact on everyday Australians, the way cuts to Medicare or broadening the GST would," she said.

Bill Mitchell, Professor of Economics at the University of Newcastle and Director of the Centre of Full Employment and Equity, will also address tonight's forum.

Organised by the Save Medicare Campaign Sydney, community members and media are encouraged to attend the forum in the Tower Building (Room CB02.04.29) at the University of Technology, Sydney, at 15 Broadway from 6:30pm.

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