



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Health Minister says no beds to close

NSW Health Minister Jillian Skinner has reassured nurses and midwives the State Government would explore ways to absorb the Abbott Government's public hospital funding cuts, without closing hospital beds.

The Minister made the commitment today during a meeting with Acting General Secretary of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA), Judith Kiejda, at State Parliament.

The NSWNMA had called for an urgent meeting with the Minister after Premier Mike Baird indicated last week up to 300 public hospital beds could close from July 1, citing NSW could not afford to absorb the federal Budget cuts.

Ms Skinner today confirmed the government would not close beds as result of the Commonwealth changes to health funding, nor would it introduce a co-payment for patients presenting at emergency departments in NSW.

Ms Kiejda said she was satisfied with the briefing and the Minister's pledge to look at options to ensure all patients had access to treatment across the State.

"Our members are committed to the delivery of safe patient care and were shocked at the prospect of hospital bed closures, which would have resulted in a loss of 400 full-time equivalent nursing staff," Ms Kiejda said.

"Clearly, the Abbott Government has shirked its responsibility by cutting funding to the State's already strained public hospital system.

"We are pleased Minister Skinner clarified today that there will be no bed closures as a result of the Commonwealth's cuts and also no co-payment imposed on patients presenting at emergency departments in NSW.

"The enormity of the Abbott Government's health cuts will leave a massive deficit for the State Government to absorb and therefore we will be watching closely to make sure the government puts patients first in its upcoming Budget."

The NSWNMA will continue to raise awareness of its campaign to put patient safety first, calling on the NSW government to introduce mandatory nurse-to-patient ratios in all public hospital emergency departments.

Television advertisements will air from this Sunday, highlighting the need for nurse-to-patient ratios in emergency departments and adverse impacts of the Commonwealth's proposed co-payment for patients presenting at emergency departments.

The campaign for nurse-to-patient ratios to be introduced throughout rural and regional areas will also be highlighted.



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