



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nurses warn against Americanisation of health in gripping TV advertisement

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) is due to launch a new television advertising campaign, to air across metropolitan and regional NSW, ahead of next month's state election.

The *Patients before Profits* campaign highlights the adverse impacts of Australia's world-class health care system being eroded by a heavily privatised, American-style health system.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said the Liberal-National Government's current health agenda of privatising public hospitals and services could result in a public health system in NSW where patients pay more and corporate shareholders make profits on taxpayer-funded services.

"Operating under direction from Canberra to bring 'price signals' into health, the Liberal-National Government has been picking off parts of our public health system and paving the way for its Americanisation," said Mr Holmes.

"It's a combination of the attempts to dismantle Medicare, the privatisation of public hospitals and health services, as well as scope for private insurers to enter primary care, that will lead to an Americanisation of our health system.

"This government has plenty of form in health privatisation already: sub-acute mental health services are being privatised, new palliative care services have been gifted to the for-profit sector and disability services will cease to be government-run by 2018.

"Last December, the government signed a 20-year contract with private operator Healthscope to build and run the new Northern Beaches Hospital in Sydney, despite the fact Public-Private Partnerships in health have a history of failure in NSW – take Port Macquarie Base Hospital for example.

"There is an undeniable pattern emerging as this first-term government continues to abrogate its duty of care in health. These decisions are not in the best interests of NSW patients, the real winners are the for-profit sector shareholders.

"Patients who can afford and choose to utilise private hospitals for medical treatment should be able to, however, private hospitals should not be handed public health funding on a platter."

The *Patients before Profits* campaign showcases the detrimental effect 'price signals' would have on the NSW public health system, by illustrating a range of medical charges patients in the United States are often confronted with for treatments.

"The American health system is not a model we want replicated here in Australia or, importantly, in NSW. It is plagued by unethical corporate interests and health outcomes for patients are far worse as a result of exorbitant medical costs," Mr Holmes said.



“Our members have a direct message for the State Liberal-National Government to put patients before profits and stop privatising public hospitals and associated health services.

“Rather than criticising the workforce who stand at the frontline of our health system, the Liberal-National Government should listen to the nurses and midwives who endeavour to deliver safe patient care and the best health outcomes possible to the people of NSW,” said Mr Holmes.

As a registered third-party campaigner for the upcoming state election, the NSWNMA developed the *Patients before Profits* campaign following a directive from its Annual Conference delegates, representing almost 60,000 nurses and midwives statewide.

The campaign advertisement will air from Sunday, 8 February 2015. More details of the campaign can be found online at www.patientsbeforeprofits.org.au.

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