



Health polices and where parties stand



Nurse-to-patient ratios

After the 2011 state election, the incoming Liberal government honoured a Memorandum of Understanding between the outgoing Labor government and the NSWNMA, delivering the first mandated nurse-to-patient ratios in NSW.

To date, there has been no further commitment to extend nurse-to-patient ratios in their health policy.

NSW Greens health policy says it will work toward increasing nurse staffing-to-patient ratios and skills mixes that ensure patient safety, better health outcomes, high recruitment retention, continued professional development and adequate training of staff.

NSW Labor has included the extension of nurse-to-patient ratios in their health policy. They have committed to employing more nurses in emergency departments and paediatric wards to improve patient care, save lives and reduce waiting times.

The extra nurses will bring ratios to one nurse for every three patients in every emergency department in NSW, under law.

Privatisation of public hospitals and health services

"I will support partnering with the private sector if we can deliver better facilities, improved services and great outcomes for the community. That's what I believe in."
— *NSW Premier Mike Baird*

"This is the next step towards state governments abandoning responsibility for quality hospitals and handing the sick and injured over to profit-driven corporations. Northern Beaches Hospital is a frightening blueprint for the next generation of hospitals. The Greens are calling for the NSW government to abandon the privatisation of public hospitals." — *Dr John Kaye, Greens health spokesperson*

"The Liberals and Nationals have an ideological obsession with privatisation and selling off public assets. Sadly, once public assets like electricity or public hospitals are privatised they are gone forever and out of the community's control. As the party that created Medicare, Labor believes in a strong public health system, where hospitals are run for patients, not for profits." — *Walt Secord, Labor Shadow Minister for Health*

Registered nurses in aged care

NSW Minister for Health Jillian Skinner is conducting an 18 month review into the distinction between high and low care in residential aged care facilities, this could impact on registered nurses being required 24/7.

While welcoming the Health Minister's interim review, the Greens warn of vigilance in ensuring that consultation with the aged care sector does not result in any reduction in the quality of nursing care in NSW.

As part of its health policy, Labor has committed it would legislate to extend the legal requirement that NSW aged care facilities must have a registered nurse on duty at all times.

Patients *before* Profits\$



Stop the Americanisation of our health system

Australians' out of pocket expenses for health care are already high among OECD economies, second only to the US. Further privatisation of the public health system will exacerbate these concerns.

Examples of actual costs for treatment in the American privatised health system:

- Prostatectomy \$103,000¹
- Hernia operation \$105,000¹
- Breast cancer treatment \$123,000¹

In America, 123 people die every day because they cannot afford the costs of hospitals run by private companies. Now the Liberal-Nationals in NSW plan to keep handing our public health services to private corporations – just like America. Think what this will mean for you and your family.

Privatisation of our public health system by stealth

The encroaching privatisation of our public health system is of crucial importance to nurses and midwives as well as to patients.

Over the past four years, the NSW Liberals-Nationals pushed an aggressive agenda of privatising our public hospitals and health services including:

- Resurrecting the failed policy of asking private companies to run public hospitals, starting with the new Northern Beaches Hospital in Sydney.
- Privatising essential health services like sub-acute and rehabilitation mental health services; new palliative care services; disability and home care services.
- All new hospitals like the new Maitland Hospital at Metford are at risk of being handed over to the private sector.
- The government is market testing delivery of surgical services at the new Byron Central Hospital.

¹ Citation: Institute for Health and Socio-Economic Policy calculations of the California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development Inpatient Discharge Data, 2013 for Cedar-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, California.