

Transcript: AMA Vice President Dr Chris Moy on The Today Show, Tuesday 19 April 2022.

Subject: Labor and LNP election health policies, Medicare, and AMA health policy scorecard

KARL STEFANOVIC: Well, piecemeal and superficial health policies - that is the damning assessment of both parties by the Australian Medical Association this morning. For more, we're joined by the Vice President, Dr Chris Moy, in Adelaide. Doctor, good morning to you. Thanks for your time. If I might start, first of all, can I ask you about the seven-day isolation period? Do you think it's time we got rid of that?

CHRIS MOY: Well, it really gets down to whether, overall, it's going to increase the number of cases and then reflect in those ending up in hospital. So really, we have to look at the numbers and whether overall it's going to be a net benefit, because it could actually be worse in the end.

KARL STEFANOVIC: It seems like COVID is everywhere right now. Unfortunately, though, a number of workplaces, a number of industries - in fact, every industry that I can think of - is affected by these numbers, so it wouldn't be far off, would it?

CHRIS MOY: I understand the thinking behind- yeah, and it makes it easy because people aren't away from work as a close contact. But the flipside is they could actually end up- they could be away from work because they're all sick at the same time, and that's what happened earlier this year. So it's getting the right balance overall...

KARL STEFANOVIC: Yeah.

CHRIS MOY: ... and making sure that, first up, we get as many people vaccinated as possible, so they don't get sick in the first place.

KARL STEFANOVIC: Both teams are even in the polling right now as we go to air this morning. Who do you think will win?

CHRIS MOY: Well, in terms of health, both of them have been horrendous. So far, what we've seen in terms of policy to actually stop the logjam in hospital, to stop people dying in emergency departments, or ramping, or in terms of making it easier for you to see a GP which is a huge crisis at the moment, neither party has come up with anything. It's all been superficial, incoherent, piecemeal stuff so far. And there's been a lot of noise last week. So let's see if they can actually pull out some real stuff in the coming week.

KARL STEFANOVIC: Okay. A lot of that responsibility falls on the states obviously. You talked about ramping in Queensland. Also, we've seen that through some parts of Victoria. I know that having travelled through regional Victoria and New South Wales, staffing is a massive problem. Nurses are tired. They've been on the frontline of this for so long now. Many are thinking of leaving. I mean, surely that's one of the bigger crises?

CHRIS MOY: Well, the problem is there is no coherent policy for health in the longer term from either party - it's all piecemeal stuff. So what we need to see is policies to really stop the long-term logjam in hospitals. It's patently clear that our hospitals are too full, and people can't get care. So people are either not getting the care and we're seeing people dying, you know, before they can get emergency care. And also, they can't get in to get their surgery done in time.

And then the other side is, it is a major responsibility of health to be able to fix general practice and to really be able to have a plan for general practice so that people can see their general practitioner. And we haven't seen a plan for that as well, and in fact, the Liberal LNP have actually reneged and broken

a major promise on following through on a 10-year primary healthcare plan, which was actually meant to fix that. So, really, so far...

KARL STEFANOVIC: Okay.

CHRIS MOY: ... all we've seen is - if you're going to vote on health, it's all been rubbish so far, unfortunately.

KARL STEFANOVIC: Okay, all right. And we're going to obviously find out in a few weeks' time, but what is the Coalition offering up just for viewers at home so they can have a look?

CHRIS MOY: Zero at the moment. So don't even bother, and they've broken a promise.

KARL STEFANOVIC: And the Opposition?

CHRIS MOY: Well, the Opposition have just come up with this slightly crazy, urgent care centre thing, which is just really very superficial. It may actually damage normal practices, and it's a bit too close to those white elephant super clinics that we saw previously.

So look, for us, the AMA, we'll be providing a report card at the end of all this to actually cut through all the rubbish and the noise and we'll give them a scorecard. We're calling it the True Friend of Medicare Cup because they all want to be the friends of Medicare, but neither of them are actually doing a very good job at the moment. And if you're going to vote on health, which is pretty core business for governments, well, we'll give them a score at the end of this, so hopefully your viewers will actually have a better picture of what really is going on.

KARL STEFANOVIC: Do you trust the Government when it says that there'll be no cuts to Medicare?

CHRIS MOY: Well, our problem with them is they reneged on a major promise to follow through on this thing called the Ten-Year Primary Healthcare Plan. So, in fact, they've led us along. I was in the meetings for, you know, going on for more than two years to develop this. Everybody agrees this is the way to go to modernise Medicare and actually improve general practice, and we know this is the way to go to get more GPs. But they reneged on it. And even about the \$450 million which was earmarked has actually now just disappeared all of a sudden. So no, they've been pretty bad. So it's hard to trust them on that one unfortunately.

KARL STEFANOVIC: Look forward to your report card in a couple of weeks' time. It'll be the only report card in the history of my life that I've looked forward to. Good on you. Thank you so much.

19 April 2022

CONTACT: 02 6270 5478 0427 209 753 media@ama.com.au

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: http://twitter.com/ama_media

Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>

Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>
