

## **LEADERS MUST SEIZE THE DAY TO FIX HEALTH CRISIS**

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and state and territory leaders must seize the moment when they meet tomorrow to stem the health care crisis that's leading to avoidable deaths.

AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid said Prime Minister Anthony Albanese must make good his pre-election promise to listen and work constructively with the states on hospital and health system pressures, but must also take immediate action.

"With consensus on hospital funding reform among state and territory leaders, Friday's first meeting with Prime Minister Albanese is a real moment for the health system," Dr Khorshid said.

"Mr Albanese must not only listen, but must act immediately, starting with COVID-19 funding and a new hospital agreement.

"At stake here is your loved ones and mine becoming the next statistics of a failing system.

"With cost-of-living pressures, energy concerns and competing demands on an incoming government, we know it won't be easy, but the very essence, the very fabric of a humane and functional society is its willingness to look after the sick and injured.

"Now is the time for Australia and our new government to define who we are, what we accept and what we don't accept.

"The government has already pointed to the need to address debt, but we shouldn't accept ambulance ramping, lengthening elective surgery lists and dangerous emergency department waiting times. These are evidence of governments failing to invest in health."

Dr Khorshid said the PM, working with state and territory leaders, needs to address a checklist of health reform:

- extend the National Partnership Agreement on COVID-19 beyond September, preferably until 2025
- draw up a new National Health Reform Agreement where states and territories equally share hospital funding 50-50 with the commonwealth and the 6.5 per cent cap on growth is scrapped. The states re-invest the freed-up 5 percent into improving hospital performance
- address the critical workforce shortage in health and the ongoing impact of the pandemic on that workforce
- make private health insurance more enticing through value for money, with a private health system Authority to watchdog the system
- tackle chronic disease - the biggest burden on the health system, with earlier prevention intervention and management in the community.

"It's critical we re-set our health system now, to deal with the immediate crises and issues that were ignored during the election like COVID-19 and the private health system," Dr Khorshid said.

“The health system is under enormous pressure as staff deal with the triple whammy of the serious flu season, continued COVID infections and delayed healthcare meaning people are presenting with severe problems and that’s all on top of regular demand from our growing and ageing population,” Dr Khorshid said.

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