

TRANSCRIPT

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Transcript: AMA Queensland President, Dr Nick Yim, ABC Wide Bay, Mornings with David Dowsett, Monday 30 September 2024

Subjects: Payroll tax; e-scooter injuries

DAVID DOWSETT: Over the weekend, two different e-scooter accidents sent people to hospital with head injuries. So when is enough? One incident in Bundaberg Saturday night, then another two hours later in Bargara. A similar story taking place across the state. So what impact is there to healthcare for individuals and families as they face the fallout of fall-offs?

Well, with me is Dr Nick Yim, President of AMA Queensland. Nick, before we talk about e-scooters – cost-of-living crisis, Medicare appointments, refund \$43 when you're paying, what, \$80-something for an appointment? What's your experience out there? Is it a struggle for people to afford these things?

DR NICK YIM: You've got a few questions there, David. You're absolutely right. The cost-of-living crisis is affecting a lot of regional and rural Queenslanders. We do know in our region in the Wide Bay, there is an ageing population and that's associated with chronic disease. So as you can imagine, many of them are needing to see the doctors more often. We heard yesterday that the LNP has committed to a payroll tax exemption for general practice which is really positive. Hopefully all parties will also commit to that exemption to ensure that general practice remains viable, to ensure that they are open, seeing the patients.

DAVID DOWSETT: Do you think some are actually choosing not to go to the doctor these days because they just can't afford it?

DR NICK YIM: I think it's a juggling act for a lot of my patients as well. So many patients do come to me and ask which of these medications are essential? And at the same time, sometimes I am seeing a delayed presentation. So they are waiting a little bit longer.

DAVID DOWSETT: All right. On to the e-scooters and well, another two head injuries. Do you think the public is numb to the issue of e-scooter incidents these days because there's just so many?

DR NICK YIM: It is quite concerning. I spoke to you and your listeners maybe six or 12 months ago about the same topic. And I think we are seeing increased rates of injuries. We do know that prevention is better than the cure. It's something where a lot of these injuries might be associated with excess speed. Sometimes it could be just not using the preventative gear - knee pads, shin pads, helmets. And unfortunately, sometimes these e-scooter accidents are also associated with alcohol. But what we must remember is a lot of these injuries, while some of them might be minor, some of them can be quite severe. We're talking about head injuries and having a head injury can actually lead to long term permanent health issues for that individual.

DAVID DOWSETT: So are you actually coming across e-scooter accidents causing fatal or permanent damage?

DR NICK YIM: It comes down to many factors. I haven't heard of one recently causing fatal injury, but obviously across the state, we have seen some quite severe e-scooter injuries. And sometimes that can involve other pedestrians, maybe other car users. And, as you can imagine, when an e-scooter hits a car that's often quite catastrophic.

DAVID DOWSETT: Some places they have been banned of late, but would you like to see that here?

DR NICK YIM: I think that's going to require a fair bit of community consultancy, but the key message that I want to put ahead is a lot of these e-scooter injuries can be preventable. And as you can imagine, when these injuries present to hospitals, that can create challenges and add to the extra workload of the doctors, nurses and allied health.

We are in an election year, workforce is a big issue, and we do want to ensure that we are protecting that workforce. At the same time, we all know that there's wait times for elective surgery. So as you can imagine, if you have a need for surgery or you need to see a doctor, time is going to be an issue for those non-urgent things.

DAVID DOWSETT: So what do you see as the answer when it comes to keeping us healthy and still using e-scooters?

DR NICK YIM: The key message is definitely ride to the situation, use those roads safely. Use that appropriate speed, and please wear those helmets. And if you have had a few drinks or you are a little bit intoxicated, maybe the best bet is to catch that taxi or Uber home.

DAVID DOWSETT: Makes sense. Nick, appreciate your time this morning. Dr Nick Yim, President of AMA Queensland.

Contact: AMA Queensland Media: +61 419 735 641

media@amaq.com.au