

TRANSCRIPT

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Transcript: AMA Queensland President, Dr Nick Yim, 4BC Radio, Mornings with Bill McDonald, Friday 7 March 2025

Subject: Medical emergencies during natural disasters

BILL MCDONALD: As concerning as this situation is, it is no doubt even scarier for people facing chronic health challenges at the moment. It's important we know what to do if a medical emergency happens during the cyclone. Dr Nick Yim is the President of AMA Queensland, and he joins us on the line. Good morning, Nick.

DR NICK YIM: Good morning, Bill.

BILL MCDONALD: It's important for people to know that hospitals are still available if a medical emergency happens, like a heart attack or a bad injury, any sort of emergency. What is the situation with our major hospitals?

DR NICK YIM: All emergency departments are still operational. The key thing is, if people are having an emergency, having a heart attack or stroke, please call Triple Zero. At the same time, we acknowledge that it can be a challenging and anxious time for many people in southeast Queensland and northern New South Wales. If you are unwell, if you're not sure, we have set up a Virtual Emergency Care Service across Queensland, which is brilliant. Their number is 13 HEALTH. That's something we offer for non-emergency situations. But to reiterate, if someone is having a heart attack, having a stroke, call that Triple Zero number.

BILL MCDONALD: I'll just get that number again, and what is it for, for non-urgent stuff?

DR NICK YIM: If people are not sure, it's 13 HEALTH, **13 432 584**. It's also on the Queensland Health website for [Virtual Emergency Care Services](#).

BILL MCDONALD: Great to know. It sounds like the emergency departments, from what the Premier said, they're going over and above to make sure that hospital staff, if they're willing to and if they're able to, will be able to stay on site so the staffing levels will remain intact.

DR NICK YIM: Absolutely. I thank all the doctors, nurses, administration staff, and allied health staff who are working over this emergency period because we acknowledge that they also live in the cyclone area, and they've also got families, etc. to be aware of. So yes, hospitals are working, the emergency services are working, and I thank them for that.

BILL MCDONALD: What do you say to – I don't know if this is another category or it falls into the last one – people that may have a serious ongoing health condition, and they're perhaps concerned about if their health takes a turn over the next few days.

DR NICK YIM: I hope that people have prepared their medications over the past couple of days, they have plenty of water, they've got their batteries and supply. At the same time, many GP practices across

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Brisbane, while they may be shut, they may be offering telephone services. If they're not operational, we've also got that 13 HEALTH number as I alluded to earlier.

BILL MCDONALD: How are the hospitals coping at the moment? What other preparations apart from staff being able to stay on board, stay there and sleep there? What are the preparations?

DR NICK YIM: We know that hospitals have their generators, they've got backup power supplies, they are prepared. That's the key thing. We know that elective surgery has been put on hold for a couple of days now. So we are getting all hands on deck and I think this is something we have to prepare for.

BILL MCDONALD: If there is anybody out there – I mean, I know myself and cholesterol medication, that's a pretty common one. So, I went and made sure I had an extra bit of backup in case. If people haven't done that, though, and they're worried and they think – 'well, I'm going to run out, I need something' – what do they do?

DR NICK YIM: I think this is the challenge, isn't it? It depends where you are in the state. There might be a small window of opportunity to pop out to your local pharmacy if they still remain open. But as you can imagine, if they are in the areas where there's high winds, we don't recommend people drive. So, it's dependant on location. At the same time, if you're not sure about that medication, please give your general practice a call if they are operating by telehealth or that 13 HEALTH number for advice.

BILL MCDONALD: Okay. Thanks very much. You take care and stay safe, Nick.

DR NICK YIM: You too, Bill. Thank you very much.

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