



AMA SA calls for clarity and honest discussions in response to the Winter Demand Plan

The following quotes are attributable to AMA SA Vice President Associate Professor Peter Subramaniam.

AMA SA welcomes the release of the 2025 Winter Demand Plan which acknowledges the seasonal pressures our health system faces and outlines measures to manage increasing patient demand.

While planning for additional capacity is necessary, our focus must also be on prevention, early intervention, and ensuring the right care is available in the community - reducing the need for hospital presentation wherever possible.

As we saw last year with the prolonged code yellow and elective surgery shutdown, reactive measures alone are not enough. The AMA continues to advocate for ongoing and genuine investment in primary and community care - particularly general practice - in both metro and regional areas. This investment is essential so South Australians can access early care - especially for respiratory illnesses in the winter months - and other preventable conditions before they escalate to emergency presentations.

We urge the government to ensure that GPs are well-supported to provide accessible care, including increased access to after-hours and urgent primary care services. We also seek clarity on workforce strategies to keep doctors, nurses, and hospital staff well during peak respiratory virus season, particularly in relation to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) usage, staff vaccination policies, and broader infection control measures.

The AMA acknowledges that bed pressures are not just a winter problem but persist year-round. Given this, it is highly likely that elective surgeries will once again be delayed or cancelled due to urgent demand for hospital beds.

We call for an honest and transparent discussion about the true capacity to deliver on elective surgery targets so that community expectations can be appropriately set and met. It is essential that doctors in the public system are not placed under unrealistic pressure to meet targets that the system cannot support.

The plan proposes transferring patients from metropolitan to regional hospitals as part of its capacity strategy. AMA SA stresses that this must not shift the problem from city hospitals to under-resourced regional facilities.

MEDIA RELEASE

Regional hospitals must be adequately staffed and resourced to manage any increased patient load safely.

Doctors across general practice and hospital settings do their best for their patients in an already stretched system. AMA SA stands with them and will continue to advocate for systemic improvements, minimising bureaucratic barriers, and ensuring effective patient flow to mitigate bed pressures.

We look forward to working with all parties, including the government, to ensure these strategies translate into tangible and measurable support for patients and the healthcare workforce as we head into winter.

For more information or to organise an interview please contact Media and Communications Advisor Ben Terry on 0478 847 604.

MEDIA RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE