



AMA SA calls for action before winter demand peaks

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The President of the Australian Medical Association South Australia (AMA SA) says April's ambulance ramping figures underscore the urgent need for action before winter demand peaks.

Latest SA Health data shows 3,949 hours were lost to ramping last month – the highest April figure ever recorded.

AMA SA President Associate Professor Peter Subramaniam says the increase in lost hours points to worsening pressure on the system at a critical time, as flu and RSV cases begin to rise.

'SA Health's Winter Demand Plan centres on delivering more beds – including an additional 50 step-down beds at College Grove to support older patients who no longer require acute hospital care,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'But so far, only 10 of those promised beds have been delivered, with the government promising the rest will be online at an unspecified date mid-year.

'AMA SA supports this plan on the understanding the beds are delivered at scale, and in time to manage the surge in demand that comes with winter.

'We are now calling for these step-down beds – and other measures in the Winter Demand Plan – to be delivered in full, and without delay, before flu and RSV cases reach their peak.'

A/Prof Subramaniam says strengthening GP-led care in the community must also be part of the solution, to keep people well and reduce avoidable hospital presentations that contribute to ramping.

'Ahead of the election, AMA SA was clear about the need to invest in general practice,' A/Prof Subramaniam says.

'That includes incentives to support GPs to stay open after hours and deliver care in residential aged care.

'GPs are the most effective – and most cost-effective – way to keep the community well. They play a critical role in prevention, including vaccination, and in treating illness early before it becomes more serious.

'We cannot keep doing the same thing and expect a different result.

'AMA SA calls on the Government to revisit the proposals we put forward prior to the election, and we stand ready to work with decision-makers on practical solutions that will protect South Australians this winter and beyond.'

For interview requests, please contact media manager Ben Terry on 0478 847 604.

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