

We The People

Program 129

First Aid for Australia's Health System



When we are young and healthy we seldom think about all that can go wrong in terms of our health and that's probably a good thing as youth is no time to be morbid. Mind you, being older is no time to be excessively focused on the negative either. Nevertheless age brings challenges and our focus inevitably shifts to health as we grow older because we come to realise just how important good health is for our quality of life. I must say I feel great compassion toward those who are young and have a significant health issue and it must be disheartening for many families. On a positive note Australia has a marvelous health care system in spite of government and its bureaucratic meddling. It seems that governments only re-act when issues arise instead of proactively reviewing Australia's health system regularly to ensure its efficient and affordable future.

Australians enjoy the third highest life expectancy of any country in the world. We have a health system which at its best is the equal of any other. Medicare, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and our public hospitals all provide equity and access to life saving treatments. Despite these positive achievements there is still much to do to improve our health system. If the system is not affordable eventually that will cause its demise and so proper management and good planning are all important. This has to involve government as well as the private sector for an array of reasons. Generally and unfortunately there is a lack of co-ordination between government departments and the system could be described as a series of disjointed silos.

When it comes to health the various layers of government have turned the blame game into an art form where the public lose because of recalcitrant people only working hard to preserve their own little myopic silo world. This is not just government but the medical industry as a whole which guards its ramparts with vigour. Put the two together and it's a wonder the health system works at all. What is revealed is the inordinate waste across the sector at the direct cost to we the people. We have all heard about how the population is aging and the tremendous burden this will place on the health system in years to come.....what absolute inaccurate rot. The very thing that threatens Australia's health system is bureaucratic grid lock, incompetence and fragmentation and the lawyers who make a living picking over the bones of those good doctors who are sitting ducks for an unaffordable legal system without natural justice. Some of the legal profession are nothing but ambulance chasers in my view.

The latest unfair change introduced by the previous federal Labor government and now being endorsed by the new Coalition bunch, is to place a time bomb in the system. It's elegantly simple really but you won't hear much about it. It goes like this.....the private health system is vital for Australia in that it makes the whole health system affordable and supports the public sector by taking pressure off the public hospitals and so its essential private health is kept viable. To encourage participation in private health the government offers a rebate on the premiums we pay and that's good. However buried in their doctrine is this little gem which says and I quote.....*From 1 April 2014, the private health insurance rebate will be adjusted annually by a factor representing the ratio of the proportional increase in the consumer price index to the proportional average premium increase.* Now If you didn't understand that then the bureaucrats have done their job very well because it simply means your private hospital cover rebate will be driven by either the consumer price index or the premium increases, whichever is lower. This means the government rebate will never again fully compensate for increases in health premiums. We will slowly fall behind and over time the private system will become undesirable and that's crazy as it will ultimately place more pressure on the public system. Just a little change, just like it was a little ice berg that sank the Titanic. This kind of planning is not in our best interest nationally but it cleverly and imperceptively pushes the problem forward, slowly over time past the next election, before the results accumulate. There are two things we can do to stop all this and they areget rid of one layer of government and cap the population. Sounds simple and it is and all we need is an astute leader who will put the people first for a change and not be deterred by politicians, bureaucrats, medical moguls or ambulance chasers. Friends, we need a prescription for common sense and honesty and these medications have no nasty side effects and offer a complete cure from politocracy.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley