



04/10/2005

Dear Mr Lindsay,

In response to your letter titled 'Townsville Hospital Problems' I have the following suggestions and comments:

- More medical centers need to exist – particularly medical centers which bulk bill. A large majority of problems, such as long waiting times at the Emergency department occur, due to people presenting with minor problems and expecting to be seen immediately. An emergency department is for acutely ill people who require emergency treatment – however, at present the TTH emergency department is mostly used as a GP clinic. It is ridiculous the amount of people who present to the emergency department with minor problems which can and SHOULD be dealt with within a GP setting, however, people can 1) not afford to see a GP or 2) are unable to get an appointment at a GP clinic.
- Serious and ongoing problems within the Townsville Hospital will never be solved until there are ADEQUATE numbers in Nursing staff and doctors. Better patient outcomes will also come with more staffing numbers and better pay and increased job satisfaction for nurses.
- Many patients within the Townsville Hospital medical wards are patients who require aged care facilities. When I was working on a medical ward this year, we had a ward of 40 beds and 30 beds were being used for elderly patients, who were awaiting nursing home placement. These are acute beds which are being used by patients who require end of life care – this results in an acute bed being consumed by a non-acute

full nursing care patient. 30 full nursing care patients, in an acute ward = increased pressure and huge work load on underpaid nurses, decreased job satisfaction and poor patient outcomes for the patient.

- Use the old hospital for something!! We need many more aged care facilities, so why not use the old hospital? If not used as an aged care facility, why not use the old hospital for a type of 'GP clinic' (eg: colds and flues etc) so people can go there, instead of the emergency department?
- Why can't the Mater Hospital Emergency department re-open? As a recently graduated nurse and member of the Townsville Hospital Emergency department it is amazing at the amount of patients who have private health cover and would be happy to pay and be seen at a private emergency department. This would result in better continuity of care (rather than them being seen at TTH, then ambulance transferred, then put into the care of other nurses and doctors at the Mater) and would also *assist* in decreasing the HUGE workload and patient numbers in the TTH emergency department.
- What is the use of having beds 'available' within the hospital, but unable to put patients into to them due to lack of staff to staff the beds!? This results in AGAIN increased workload on emergency medical staff members, due to patients having to be 'kept' within the emergency department in the 'corridors' etc.
- Why can our country provide millions of dollars to overseas aid (such as Hurricane Katrina Appeal etc), yet our own medical system is in crisis and lacking medical resources?

Looking forward to hearing from you,


Jody Mogensen