



**HEALTH
MONITOR**
MEDICAL CENTRE

31 - 35 Burgundy Street
Heidelberg Vic 3084
Tel: (03) 9457 5755
Fax: (03) 9459 5830
A.C.N.032 264 418

DR MICHAEL PIETRYK

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

(02) 6277 3830

FAX TO:

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE
ON MEDICARE

Att: MR. E. HUMPHREY, SECRETARY.

Date: 24. 8. 03

No. of pages: 10 (incl.)

FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL MEMBERS:

THE AMAZING (BUT IN VICTORIA NOT UNEXPECTED) SACKING OF PROFESSOR PADDY DEWAN BY "HEALTH BUREAUCRATS" AT MELBOURNE'S ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL NEEDS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE COMMITTEE AS AN OUTRAGEOUS EXAMPLE OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN BUREAUCRATS TRY + HIDE UNDERFUNDING IN THE MEDICAL SYSTEM.

THE STATE CLAIMS ITS CHRONIC UNDERFUNDING IS DUE TO SHORTFALLS IN GRANTS FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

PROFESSOR DEWAN IS A WORLD AUTHORITY IN PEDIATRIC SURGERY OF THE RENAL TRACT. HIS REAL PROBLEM AT THE HANDS OF HEALTH BUREAUCRATS WAS THAT HE BLEW THE WHISTLE ON UNDERFUNDING OF EQUIPMENT AND IN OTHER AREAS WHICH ENDANGERED PATIENT SAFETY AT THE RCH. BOTH I + NUMEROUS COLLEAGUES WHO REFER TO PROF. DEWAN ARE TOTALLY DISGUSTED AT HIS SACKING + FEAR THAT HE WILL GO OVERSEAS, A LOSS THAT WILL BE IRREPLACEABLE.

THE DISTRESSED PARENTS OF NUMEROUS CHILDREN UNDER PROF. DEWAN'S CARE HAVE INVADATED MELBOURNE'S "TALK-BACK" RADIO. I HAVE HEARD SOME OF THESE CALLS MYSELF, INCLUDING ONE FROM A THEATRE SISTER OUTLINING AN ATROCIOUS LITANY OF EQUIPMENT SHORTAGES.

THE WAY BUREAUCRATS HAVE BEEN APPALLINGLY ABLE TO CRUCIFY SUCH A PROMINENT SURGEON BEGARS BELIEF + IS THE ULTIMATE PROOF THAT THE "HEALTH SYSTEM" (AT ALL LEVELS) IS RUN FOR THE BENEFIT OF "POLITICALLY CORRECT" APPARATCHIKS.

2.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, IMMEDIATE PARALLELS BETWEEN THE DASTARDLY TREATMENT OF PROF. DEWAN (AND OTHER VICTORIAN MEDICAL WHISTLEBLOWERS) AND THE SPURIOUS FORCED PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION OF MYSELF AT THE HANDS OF THE VIC. MED. BOARD FOR NO REASON OTHER THAN MY "POLITICALLY INCORRECT" COMMENTS ON MEDICARE TO BETH WILSON, VICTORIA'S LEFT-WING "HEALTH SERVICES COMMISSIONER". — A COPY OF THE EXAMINING PSYCHIATRISTS REPORT (TOTALLY REBUTTING THE BUREAUCRATIC APPARATUS INVOLVED) IS ON RECORD WITH MY SUBMISSION TO YOUR COMMITTEE.

ALTHOUGH I HESITATE TO MENTION PROF. DEWAN IN THE SAME BREATH AS MYSELF, WE ARE BOTH EXAMPLES OF THE DRACONIAN TREATMENT METED OUT TO THE "POLITICALLY INCORRECT" IN VICTORIA.

AS PREVIOUSLY INDICATED THE FEDERAL GOV. IS TECHNICALLY BANKRUPT DUE TO ITS CRIMINAL UNDERFUNDING OF C'WEALTH PS "SUPER" — IT IS \$90 BILLION IN THE RED IN THIS MATTER ALONE: IT CANNOT PAY ITS "MEDICARE" BILLS AS THEY FALL DUE AND AMAZINGLY FED. HEALTH BUREAUCRATS BUMPTIOUSLY ASSERT THE MEDICARE "REBATE" OF \$25 (FOR UP TO 25 MINS. OF A GP'S TIME) — $\frac{1}{2}$ OF WHAT A DOG IS WORTH AT THE VET — IS A FAIR + REASONABLE VALUATION OF THE WORTH OF AUSTRALIA'S GP PATIENTS AND NOT A CENT EXTRA FOR "AFTER HOURS" (EG. SUNDAY).

UNDER CORPORATE LAW SUCH AN ENTERPRISE WOULD BE PROHIBITED FROM TRADING + DECLARED BANKRUPT !! THIS IS WHAT HAS TO BE DONE WITH THE MEDICARE SYSTEM — DECLARE IT BANKRUPT AND LIQUIDATE IT. THE PRETENCE THAT "MEDICARE" IS STILL VIABLE IS A TOTAL FARCE.

EVEN GPs WHO WERE POLITICALLY NAIVE ENOUGH
 TO BECOME MEMBERS OF FED. GOV. SPONSORED AND
 FED. GOV. FUNDED "DIVISIONS" ARE NOW WAKING UP
 TO HOW THEY HAVE BEEN DUPED:

22 AUGUST 2003 MEDICAL OBSERVER 27

Hunter Urban division chair Dr Arn Sprogis fears that unless there's some serious action on the reform front, the top-down scenario will prevail.

"We're just not being anywhere near brave enough in setting the agenda for the future. We're backwards looking and not carving a new role," he says.

"We should be pushing towards a UK or New Zealand system, where the government sets a broad set of aims and lets [the primary care groups] get on with it. But in our Stalinist system the government decides what you have to do and how to do it."

NB: "OUR STALINIST SYSTEM" IN WHICH "THE GOVERNMENT DECIDES WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO AND HOW TO DO IT."
(AND HOW MUCH YOU WILL BE PAID — BY TOTALITARIAN HIC DECREE).

YOU WILL BE AWARE THAT THE "STALINIST" HIC HAS THE SAME INVESTIGATIVE POWERS AS THE FEDERAL POLICE!! (KGB??)

DR. ARN SPROGIS IS NOT AWARE THAT FOR SOME TIME I HAVE BEEN "BRAVE ENOUGH" IN SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE.

FOR ME, PERSONALLY, THE LINE HAS BEEN DRAWN AT THE LEVEL OF THE "RELATIVE VALUE STUDY". THE TABLE THAT FOLLOWS SHOWS "MEDICARE" VALUES OF DIFFERENT GP SERVICES AS COMPARED WITH "WORK COVER" (WORKCO) VALUES WHICH APPROXIMATE RATHER WELL WITH "INDEPENDENT UMPIRE" RVS LEVELS.

THE "MEDICARE" RIP-OFF IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR

— \$2 BILLION EACH YEAR ON MY ESTIMATION

THIS IS MASSIVE THEFT AND FRAUD FOR WHICH ANY PRIVATE OR PUBLIC COMPANY WOULD BE LIQUIDATED!!

WHEN I CONSULTED TODAY, SUNDAY, I DID NOT ALLOW MYSELF TO BE AN ACCESSORY TO THEFT BY A FEDERAL GOV. / HIC WHICH STIPULATES THAT I MUST WRITE "ITEM 23" (A MERE \$25 REBATE — SAME AS IN HRS MON. → FRID!) THEREBY VALUING MY PATIENT AT ONLY $\frac{1}{4}$ OF WHAT A DOG IS WORTH AT THE VET ON A SUNDAY (PATIENTS TELL ME "NO CHARGE OUT OF \$100 WHEN YOU TAKE THE DOG TO SEE A VET ON A SUNDAY, DOC"!).

IF THE FEDERAL GOV. CAN'T PAY AN APPROPRIATE AFTER HRS. SUNDAY REBATE THEN IT SHOULDN'T BE IN THE BUSINESS OF HEALTH INSURANCE.

I ITEMIZE MY ACCOUNT WITH LEVEL C IT. 36 FOR A REBATE OF \$47.60 ON MY SUNDAY FEE OF \$58 WHICH IS STILL $\frac{1}{2}$ VET FEES; THAT'S "SETTING THE AGENDA" FOR WHICH I FULLY EXPECT TO BE PERSECUTED BY THE "STALINIST" HIC. EACH PATIENT RECEIVES A COPY OF THE BULLETIN (26/11/02) ARTICLE.

Michael Pickup

SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 2003 • THE AGE
theage.com.au

Hospital says surgeon's stress levels posed a risk

Tom Noble
Health Editor

Fears that personal stress and poor relations with colleagues could lead to patients being harmed were cited yesterday among reasons the Royal Children's Hospital had ordered prominent surgeon Paddy Dewan to take extended leave.

Kidney and bladder procedures on 10 children were cancelled yesterday as the hospital hit out at Professor Dewan, who last week questioned its ability to deal with medical errors.

Women's and children's health chief executive, Associate Professor Kathy Alexander, said the hospital regretted the anguish and anxiety of parents and children whose operations were cancelled or are due to be rescheduled.

"I currently believe that the stress levels both of the individual concerned and also of the team within the department of surgery are now so high that a child undergoing surgery at the moment within that department may be under serious risk," Professor Alexander said.

Professor Dewan's enforced leave earlier this week follows months of acrimony at the hospital. He was asked to resign in

April but refused, prompting a board-level inquiry into allegations against him by colleagues. Professor Alexander said complaints against the surgeon by his colleagues went back five years.

Cardiologist and chairman of the hospital's medical staff association, Dr James Wilkinson, said Professor Dewan's claims about patient safety at the hospital were false, unfair and damaging to staff and the hospital.

"Paddy Dewan is a very able, very energetic, aggressive, opinionated and passionate individual," he said. "Some individuals who have those sort of characteristics do have difficulties maintaining comfortable relationships within a team."

Professor Alexander has recommended to the board that Professor Dewan's contract be terminated. A decision will be made within a month. "The whole department of surgery has indicated to me that they can't work under these circumstances any more," she said.

She said Professor Dewan's 10 patients due for surgery yesterday "may be at significant risk if the procedures were allowed to go on".

"The situation at the moment is so stressful that there is a

potential risk and I am avoiding that risk. I am not saying he is an unsafe surgeon," she said.

Mathew Dean, 12, was due for surgery on a kidney stone yesterday, his 65th operation at the hospital following his premature birth. "I couldn't believe I was in an emergency situation and had nowhere to turn," said his mother, Sue O'Connell from Geelong. "I don't want to go to another hospital. I don't want to go to another surgeon."

The situation at the moment is so stressful that there is a potential risk.

KATHY ALEXANDER, Royal Children's Hospital

After meeting Professor Alexander and doctors at the hospital, Mathew went to the Sunshine Hospital, where Professor Dewan late yesterday performed the operation.

Professor Dewan said suspending him was not in the best interests of patients. "I deeply regret that interpersonal conflict has reached the point of further adversely affecting patient care," he said. "I would never refuse to work with someone just because I didn't like them."

Sunday Herald Sun, August 24, 2003



Paddy Dewan

Dewan back in theatre

SUSPENDED Royal Children's Hospital surgeon Paddy Dewan has turned to the Sunshine Hospital to operate on one of his patients.

The outspoken surgeon, labelled "too stressed" to operate at the RCH, performed emergency surgery on 12-year-old Geelong boy Matthew Dean on Friday night.

A plastic drainage tube

attached to Matthew's kidney became blocked, needing to be urgently removed.

Matthew's mother, Sue O'Connell, said yesterday she and Matthew had been through a tough ordeal, with Professor Dewan's suspension making a difficult time even worse.

Ms O'Connell said going ahead without Prof. Dewan was not an option.

"He's an incredible surgeon and an incredible man and he has successfully operated on Matthew," she said.

Ms O'Connell said being forced to go to another hospital was tough on Matthew, who had battled a range of medical conditions since his premature birth.

She said Prof. Dewan was being treated badly by the RCH.

1. There was no indication that Dr. Pietryk is psychiatrically unfit to practice.
2. He has assumed a role of furthering the lot of general practitioners and will brook no hindrance from what he sees as injustice meted out by Federal and State Departments of Health and their various agencies. This pursuit now consumes most of his spare time and is pursued with a passion that is redolent of, but is currently less intense than, that of an overvalued idea. It follows, and it would appear very likely, that Dr. Pietryk will continue to secure relevant publicity in this regard in both the medical and general press.

Yours sincerely



DR. NORMAN JAMES MD FRANZCP FRACP FRCPsych DPM DHA

(LAST PAGE - CONCLUSIONS - OF PROF JAMES' REPORT WITH MY ADDITIONS BELOW + EMPHASIS ABOVE).

A doctor's right to speak out

GPs made scapegoats



Dr Kerry Phelp:

"The government does not want to pay for a high-quality system of primary healthcare, but it does not want to tell the electorate that it does not want to pay."

MPs visit the coalface for the real GP story

by Pamela Wilson

A MORE tolerant and fairer community attitude and well-planned government policies will go a long way to solving some of the problems that are plaguing general practice, two South Australian-based federal politicians believe.

Foreign Affairs minister Alexander Downer and Liberal Member for Grey Barry Wakelin said they were stronger advocates for the medical profession after spending some time in the surgeries of South Australian GPs last week as part of the AMA's Family Doctor Week.

Mr Wakelin said he empathised with doctors for the demands made upon them and the lack of understanding shown for their role by the community.

"We expect a lot of our doctors and I think the community needs to be a bit more tolerant. I am certainly going to try to achieve a society that gives a fairer approach for doctors to operate in," he said, after spend-

ing an hour with Port Augusta GP Dr Ranajay Bhola.

Mr Downer, who visited Dr Lindy Poole in the Adelaide Hills, said GPs faced more problems than most small businesses, including workforce shortages

practice was welcoming, it remained to be seen if this would be translated into policy changes.

However, she added that the 90-minute meeting was very positive and felt she had enlightened Mr Downer about a number

"We expect a lot of our doctors and I think the community needs to be a bit more tolerant"

and indemnity pressures that needed comprehensive solutions.

"A lot of GPs now work part-time rather than full-time and the supply of GPs into the marketplace, which is controlled, hasn't taken that into account sufficiently," Mr Downer said.

"I also know that the real earnings of GPs have declined a lot over the past few years and these border health issues ... are all very difficult problems to solve and they can't be solved by just throwing money at them."

Dr Poole said while the politician's attentiveness and genuine concern for the future of general

practice was welcoming, it remained to be seen if this would be translated into policy changes.

However, she added that the 90-minute meeting was very positive and felt she had enlightened Mr Downer about a number

of topics, including workforce shortages and the increasing burden of red tape.

"It's one thing to be talking and another thing to see some results, but it was great to have the luxury of having an ear all to yourself," she said.

Meanwhile, Dr Bhola has received an invitation from Mr Wakelin to meet on a regular basis to discuss the many issues plaguing general practice.

"He was very positive, but as to how much he will break away from party lines and take up some of these issues, I don't know," Dr Bhola said. MO

15 AUGUST 2003 MEDICAL OBSERVER 17

MR. DOWNER SAID " I KNOW THE REAL EARNINGS OF GPs HAVE DECLINED A LOT OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS "

LUCKY DOWNER DOESN'T LIVE IN VICTORIA WHERE THAT STATEMENT WOULD EARN HIM A VISIT TO PROF. JAMES, PSYCHIATRIST, AT THE HANDS OF THE "THOUGHT POLICE" APPARATCHIKS!