

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Thursday, 8 August 2024

DELIVERING A BETTER HEALTH SYSTEM FOR VICTORIAN PATIENTS

The Allan Labor Government will deliver a better, more connected health system – ensuring patients can get the care they need, in their own communities.

As a government, we've made record investment in our hospitals. That includes recruiting a record number of doctors and nurses, record funding for our hospitals and health infrastructure – and of course, our record pay deal for Victorian nurses.

Today, we're continuing to build on that record.

The Labor Government will invest a further \$1.5 billion to support our hospitals deliver world-class care, building on the more than \$8.8 billion we invested in the Budget.

This investment delivers the funding hospitals told us they needed, while also enabling Victoria to continue delivering a record number of elective surgeries.

The Labor Government has also accepted in full or accepted in principle 26 of 27 recommendations proposed by the Expert Advisory Committee, as part of its Health Services Plan.

These are recommendations that we know will make our health system stronger and more connected – while continuing our focus on patients and frontline care.

The Labor Government will deliver a number of key reforms in response to these recommendations. It will not, however, accept the recommendation to forcibly amalgamate Victoria's health services.

We believe that locals know their community's health needs best and – together with their health service leaders – their voices must be listened to in the delivery of local healthcare.

Forcing change risks being disruptive, impacting patient care.

Instead, health services will be supported to reduce non-clinical duplication and double-up, while at the same time promoting stronger partnerships between our hospitals.

This achieves the report's ambition of a more integrated and efficient health system, without disrupting the local services we know Victorian families trust and rely on.

Hospitals Victoria

The Labor Government will establish Hospitals Victoria – a new agency in the Department of Health, with a CEO who reports directly to the Health Ministers – that is fully focused on supporting hospitals to deliver frontline care.

It will also help hospitals collaborate where it just makes sense.

Right now, hospitals have different payroll and IT systems. It's why, as part of its remit, Hospitals Victoria will work with hospitals to identify back-office functions that can be consolidated and streamlined.

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The Government will continue its existing work to improve digital systems and technology, including how virtual care can be better used, in line with the report's recommendations.

The new agency will also support the operation of our hospitals and their finances – ensuring that funding and health services are focused on caring for Victorians.

Hospitals Victoria will be led by Siva Sivarajah who has extensive experience running hospitals and improving the delivery of care.

Electronic Medical Record System

We will also roll out a connected Electronic Medical Record System to all hospitals, which will provide seamless and more efficient care for patients.

Currently, our health services use different patient record systems – some of them paper based. It's outdated, it's inefficient and it often causes needless stress for patients and their families.

It's why Hospitals Victoria and the Department will work with health services to deliver a connected and standardised electronic record management system for Victoria's hospitals.

Not only will it reduce delays and duplication, it'll mean a patient's records move with them – regardless of the hospital they're being treated at.

Local Health Service Networks

In line with one of the report's key recommendations, the Government will replace Health Service Partnerships with stronger Local Health Service Networks.

Bringing together hospitals within a geographical region, these Networks will support hospitals to collaborate – enabling them to work together to deliver better care, while also better supporting staff across each region.

Each Network will establish a formal relationship with a major tertiary, a women's and a children's hospital. This will mean patients can more easily and quickly access specialist care when they need it, strengthening referral pathways and enabling the sharing of expertise across specialties.

Once established the Networks will share functions like payroll and IT – making sure our hospitals can focus on what they do best, caring for patients.

Protecting Frontline Services

We've always given our hospitals what they needed – we did this before the pandemic, throughout the pandemic and we'll continue this now.

During COVID, hospitals essentially operated without an agreed budget – because saving lives meant providing our hospitals with everything they needed to tackle the virus.

Now's the time to return to something a bit more normal – allowing hospitals to plan ahead.

It's why we've proactively worked with hospitals to develop budgets and why we will invest an additional \$1.5 billion into our hospitals.

This funding will enable our hospitals to continue delivering world-class care despite record demand, with more than half a million emergency department presentations last quarter alone – making it the busiest quarter on record.

It will also support a further 10,000 surgeries – bringing our total target for elective surgery for this financial year to 210,000 – matching the almost 210,000 surgeries performed in 2023-24, the highest figure on record.

This is the funding our hospitals told us they needed, and this is what we've delivered – because Labor will always be on the side of our hospitals.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

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“As the sister of a nurse, and the mum of a daughter who has relied on the life-saving care of our hospitals – my priority will always be patients and their families.”

“We will always support our hospitals – because that’s what Labor does.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

“Victoria’s health system is one of the best in the world, and these reforms will keep us on track to deliver even better patient care through a reformed health system that is better integrated and connected, at the same time protecting the local services we know Victorians trust and rely on.”