



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

National Service Day

Kingston Electorate: Health Care

SPEECH

Monday, 21 February 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Rishworth, Amanda, MP

Source House
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Responder
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Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (10.04 pm)—I rise to speak about the important investments in health care that this government has made in my electorate of Kingston. Ensuring health care is affordable and accessible to people when they need it is critical to ensuring a good quality of life. After years of neglect of our health system by the previous, Liberal government, it took the election of this Labor government to restart investment in our health system—training more doctors, nurses and allied health professionals and investing in critical health infrastructure, programs and equipment. These investments continue to be critical to the southern suburbs of Adelaide, where I live.

The government recently announced that six local medical practices in Kingston will receive grants of up to \$500,000 under the Gillard government's Primary Care Infrastructure Grants scheme. These grants are designed to help local GP practices expand their facilities and provide more services to local communities. The southern suburbs of Adelaide are growing at a very rapid pace, and this investment means that more families and residents will have access to good quality primary health care. Dr Sasha Mottram, from the Seaford Day and Night Clinic, one of the six successful clinics, said, 'The money we have secured under the Primary Care Infrastructure Grants scheme will enable us to construct another section of our clinic and employ more specialists and GPs to provide a range of allied health services to the community.'

This government is also delivering on its commitment to improve access to GPs outside business hours, through the Gillard government's \$10 million General Practice After Hours Program. I welcomed the announcement that three GP practices in my electorate will benefit from a grant of \$100,000 to assist with the costs of operating outside normal hours. GPs are often the first port of call for families when they fall ill, and they do not fall ill just during business hours. It is critical that we invest in after hours GP services so that more Australians can contact a doctor when they need to. Dr Shankar Mahadeva, from the Dyson Family Practice, said, 'This funding will help us to contribute to provide high-quality GP services to the community after hours.'

These grants build on a number of previous investments by this government in healthcare in southern Adelaide. Stage one of the \$25 million

Noarlunga GP superclinic is currently in operation. So patients have access to services at the Aboriginal health clinic as well as some broader services. Construction is now well underway on stage two and the superclinic is expected to be fully operational later this year. The superclinic will bring together GPs and allied health professionals to provide a diverse range of services, with a particular focus on chronic disease management.

The member for Aston spoke previously, and I would like to congratulate him on the effort that he is putting in for young people with mental health issues. Ensuring that individuals have access to mental health services is critical if we are going to help improve quality of life. I am pleased that at the recent election Labor made a commitment to expand the headspace program and to include a service in the southern suburbs of Adelaide. The process is now underway to identify a service provider for a headspace service at Noarlunga. We know that two-thirds of all people with a mental illness experience their first symptoms before the age of 21. So it is critical that young people have access to quality mental healthcare. Headspace has a proven track record when it comes to helping young people with mental health issues.

Training health professionals is also a key to this government's strategy to improve our healthcare system, and this includes not only doctors but also nurses and midwives. This government is determined to address the dire workforce shortages in medical and health professions. This dire workforce shortage was a legacy of the previous government. We as a government are doubling the number of GP training places to 1,200 a year by 2014 and have already funded training for over 1,000 new nurses per year.

Ensuring that these new health professionals have a place to train is essential. I am pleased to have officially opened the nursing skills laboratories at the Flinders University School of Nursing and Midwifery in southern Adelaide last Monday. I thank them for their hospitality and their very lifelike demonstration. The Gillard government provided \$1.8 million to assist the university with these renovations.

I have outlined the investment that this Labor government is making to our health system right now in the electorate of Kingston, but we also have a plan for our healthcare system in the future. The

historic agreement that was reached between the federal government and the states and territories last Sunday is an important reform, and I commend the reform to the House. *(Time expired)*