

Political Guts

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Saturday, 10 January 2009

The Hon. Nicola Roxon
Minister for Health and Aging
CC Prime Minister Kevin Rudd
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister Roxon,

As you will be aware by now, I have an ever expanding network of people who think and feel as I do about our nation. Despite the amazing assurances that the Health System was in wonderful condition that Mr Mark Doverty gave me in his reply to my initial letter to you on November 25th, 2008, there are still serious issues which I MUST bring to your attention.

I was contacted by a nurse in Queensland yesterday, who told me of her finding a man of around 65 years of age, otherwise quite healthy and active, but struck with a sudden and completely unexpected stroke. He had lain for an hour before she happened upon him, and she immediately applied expert first aid and called an ambulance. She ascertained from documents on him who he was and intended to call his family to let them know at which hospital on the Gold Coast he could be taken to by the ambulance. The paramedics asked if he had health insurance and she replied that she had no idea, and had never seen him before she found him incapacitated. When she asked where they were taking him, they said they had directives from Allamanda and Pindara Private Hospitals on the Gold Coast that no elderly patients were to be taken to emergency with them, unless they had private health cover. The nurse was shocked... She could not believe what she was hearing. She rang another ambulance driver later who she did know well through her work, and he confirmed that the Gold Coast Private Hospitals had issued a directive that no elderly patients were to be brought to them! At this, she spoke to me, asking for help.

Here are my questions to you. Firstly, were you aware if this? Next, is this merely the corporate greed of a mean spirited bean counter in the hospital bureaucracy, or a Federal or State Health Departmental policy? Is this a national situation, or ONLY with these Gold Coast hospitals? Finally, when will this directive be either scrapped and a public apology made to the people of Australia, and the persons responsible sacked without notice?

If this directive is not illegal, it is certainly immoral and unethical and in direct violation of the hospitals' charter, the Health Departments' charter and probably the Hippocratic Oath, if there was a doctor involved in the decision! It is a scandal of criminal importance, as the prime responsibility of the paramedics is to get urgent medical attention for the patient, when minutes and seconds count. Requiring an ambulance to drive past a well equipped and funded private hospital to a public hospital a further 15 minutes away must leave the State and Federal Health Departments and relevant ministers liable and possibly criminally liable for the death of any patient resulting from that delay. The families of patients who died as a direct result of this policy would probably be in their legal and civil rights to pursue this through the legal system. I doubt if any court would deny them what the public would see as justice. However, it could never bring back their loved one. Only a reversal of this policy directive NOW can prevent this travesty.

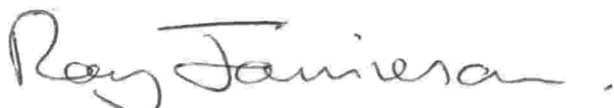
Minister, every news service will know about this bizarre situation by the time you get this letter, so I will try to get it emailed to you in advance if I can locate your email address, so you can at least have some preparation time for your answers to the media. I don't mean to make your life challenging, but I do mean to have justice and value for the citizens of this wonderful country. As Minister responsible, I feel you have both an obligation to take immediate action here, and an opportunity to perhaps give Mr Doverty's claims a ring of truth...

My criteria for success will be the rescinding of this policy, and the dismissal of the persons responsible for dreaming it up. Please join me in this quest and earn yourself the respect of the Australian people for your direct and responsible treatment of this urgent situation, before there are deaths on the hands of the people who signed this abhorrent directive!

As a final note, I will not be releasing the source of this news to me, a community spirited nurse who knows that if her identity was revealed her job would be gone immediately.

To verify this claim, just ask the Gold Coast ambulance officers about their directive, then challenge the hospitals with what you discover...

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Jamieson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Ray Jamieson
Author
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