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STRENGTHENING HOSPITAL SAFETY TO PROTECT PATIENTS

The Andrews Labor Government is cracking down on dangerous and unregulated cosmetic surgery facilities as part of a suite of new laws to protect patients and strengthen the quality and safety across the health system.

The Labor Government will today introduce the Health Legislation Amendment (Quality and Safety) Bill into the Parliament, delivering on key recommendations from Dr Stephen Duckett’s Targeting Zero: supporting the Victorian hospital system to eliminate avoidable harm and strengthen quality of care review.

The state-wide review was commissioned by the Government following the tragic discovery of a cluster of potentially avoidable newborn and stillborn deaths at Djerriwarrh Health Services.

The Bill builds on the significant work already undertaken to strengthen quality and safety across the health system, and is supported by $215 million in the Victorian Budget 2017/18 to drive down avoidable harm in our hospitals.

Our new laws will also crackdown on ‘backyard’ cosmetic surgeries. Currently, a number of day procedure facilities that perform operations such as breast augmentation are not required to be regulated if not the ‘main’ activity of the facility. The Bill will close this loophole by making regulation focus on the nature, not quantity of procedures.

Private hospitals will also be held to tougher patient quality, safety and reporting standards, ensuring all patients receive the same level of care, wherever they are treated.

The Bill will limit public hospital board member tenures to nine years, require boards to have suitable skills, and provide an expanded suite of oversight and intervention for powers for Government.

And for the first time, all hospital board members will be remunerated to reflect the additional skills and responsibilities now required to serve on a health service board.

There are also a range of new reporting requirements allowing us to identify and respond to any risks to patient safety. This will build on the work already underway by Safer Care Victoria to monitor and improve quality and safety, identify best practice ideas and initiatives, and expand them across the health system.

Further quality and safety reforms will be introduced into Parliament in 2018.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

“Dodgy backyard cosmetic surgery facilities have no place in our health system. That’s why we’ve brought in tough new laws to crack down on these unregulated operators and protect Victorians.”

“We’re putting patient safety first and improving quality of care for everyone – regardless of whether they are treated in a public or private hospital or receiving cosmetic surgery.”

“We’re doing everything we can to drive down avoidable harm in our hospitals, and make them as safe as they can possibly be.”

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