



## **United Voice, Industrial Union of Employees, Queensland**

### **Submission to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee**

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### ***Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019***

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**17 December 2019**



## **Introduction**

United Voice, Industrial Union of Employees, Queensland (United Voice) makes this submission to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee (the Committee) regarding the *Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019* (the Amendment Bill).

## **Overview of United Voice, Queensland**

United Voice represents almost 30,000 workers in Queensland across a range of public and private sector employers who are engaged in a diverse range of industries and occupations, and who remain under both the State and Federal industrial relations jurisdiction.

Our membership includes school cleaners, teacher aides, ambulance officers, health professionals and operational staff, childcare workers, those employed in the contracting industries, including but not limited to cleaning, security and hospitality, private prisons and detention centres and aged care workers.

United Voice has a long and proud history of advocating for and representing the industrial interests of our members whom are employed in the Queensland public health system.

Under the *Ambulance Service Act 1991*, our members include Paramedics, Patient Transport Officers and Emergency Medical Dispatchers.

Under the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*, our members include Pharmacy Assistants, Dental Technicians, Medical Illustrators, Radiation Therapists, Radiographers and Sonographers.

Our members are on the frontline of service delivery to our community and it is important that we value the ongoing contributions they make to the health of Queenslanders.

Intrinsically, our members have always been dedicated to the health of Queenslanders, but the complexity of their roles has evolved exponentially over the past decades and for this reason, United Voice and our members welcome and support this bill.

## **Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019**

United Voice supports the measures and objectives contemplated by the *Health Practitioner Amendment Bill 2019* as part of amendments that are to implement policy initiatives and improve the effective operation of the legislation that regulate the provision of health services in Queensland

which include reforms to the following legislation:

- *The Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011;*
- *The Ambulance Service Act 1991;*
- *The Public Health Act 2005.*

### **Networked Governance**

As a result of amendments in the bill, the *Hospital and Health Boards Act* and the *Ambulance Service Act* will recognise that the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) and the hospital and health services (HHSs) must collaborate to manage the interaction between the services they provide.

United Voice supports the strengthening of networked governance of the Queensland public health system. If enacted, this bill will seize upon the opportunity to strengthen a networked approach emphasising that each part of the system has obligations to the system as a whole and to each other.

United Voice is intimately connected to the challenges in the Queensland public health system confronted by our members. Improved collaboration, co-operation and governance will rise to meet these challenges and can only deliver better outcomes for patients.

Anecdotally, when we have seen improved collaboration and co-operation we see better outcomes for patients. This was most recently evidenced by the workshop collaboration undertaken in consultation with unions by the Metro South hospital and health service (MSHHS) and QAS to tackle metropolitan hospital and health services as the major areas experiencing increased demand on their emergency departments.

### **Improving Patient Off Stretcher Time (POST)**

Improving Patient Off Stretcher Time (POST) was identified as a key area for improvement and a workshop forum aimed to identify how Queensland Health could work with QAS toward a system to ensure that patients are transferred from stretchers as quickly as possible to facilitate the return of ambulances to the community.

Senior decision makers from both MSHHS and QAS came together with relevant local experts and stakeholders to work through a more cohesive process for the transfer of patient care at the emergency department. A shared desire to address a problematic situation has resulted in some

innovative processes being put in place which has already seen gains in lost time for Ambulance crews and pro-active staffing mixes for the emergency department staff.

POST is an initiative which is consistent with the proposed amendments in the bill which signal the high-level policy intent for Queensland Health, the hospital and health services and the QAS to share resources and collaborate more effectively with each other in the best interests of the system as a whole and the Queensland public that they serve.

### **Conclusion**

United Voice and our members support the measures and objectives contemplated by the *Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019* meaning the community can have greater confidence in the health services that they receive from the Queensland public health system.