



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 3 April 2001

PRIVATE HEALTH FACILITIES ACT

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.27 a.m.): Cardiologists are warning of increased risk of death and heart attacks following the state Labor Health Minister's refusal to change legislation which restricts access to a key screening test for coronary artery disease in many rural and regional areas of Queensland.

I am calling on the Health Minister to place a moratorium on the implementation of the new regulations under the Private Health Facilities Act until the issues of concern are resolved. Cardiologists I have talked to say that they were not consulted about these changes which ban them from performing stress testing in their rooms—a move which is more restrictive than the American Heart Association guidelines, the European Society of Cardiology guidelines or the guidelines of the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand and a move that specialists say will mean that they will no longer be able to provide the service, leading to patients increasingly being added to public hospital waiting lists.

I table a copy of a letter of the Cardiac Society of Australia to the minister which clearly outlines that they were not consulted before these regulations were committed to by government. I quote from the chairman of the Queensland branch of the Cardiac Society, Connor Aroney, where he said that—

A move to restrict the procedure of the day hospitals will lead to waiting lists and delays in diagnosis in patients with symptomatic coronary artery disease. This will be associated with increased cardiac events including death.

Dr Aroney said that these restrictions would lead to Queensland becoming a laughing-stock in health, with a lack of access to cardiac stress testing leading to more patients having to undertake more costly procedures at large urban and inner city areas. Another cardiologist said that these private patients would be going into the public system because that particular cardiologist said that he is one of many who are unable to provide that service anymore.

I am concerned that the Health Minister's current brawl and contempt for specialists and doctors is coming at a high cost for patients. It is coming at a high cost—

Time expired.
