




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

eHealth Investment Strategy; National Stroke Week

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.22 pm): As honourable members would be aware, Queensland's health system is under pressure, with federal funding cuts coming at a time when the state's population is not only growing but also ageing. There has always been an imperative to have a system run as efficiently as possible, but the looming circumstances make such efficiencies imperative.

In the drive for efficiency, at the beginning of August, I announced the creation of eHealth Queensland. eHealth Queensland combines the Health Services Information Agency and the Office of the Chief Health Information Officer to form a single strong agency. But its aim is to drive efficiencies within the system through the use of new information and communications technology which will allow our clinicians on the front line to spend more time on patient care. A major part of this is a 20-year vision for ICT investment in health which provides a clear pathway to the delivery of a new integrated ICT framework for Queensland Health.

It also, significantly, responds to the first recommendation of the Chesterman commission of inquiry into payroll—something which, despite three years in the job, the member for Southern Downs, Lawrence Springborg, never got around to doing. The eHealth Investment Strategy details the priority investment needed in four primary categories—clinical systems, business systems, ICT infrastructure and the digital future of Queensland Health. With respect to the last element, I can tell the House that we are well on the way to having Queensland's first digital hospital in the public sector later this year when Princess Alexandra Hospital comes on line. This strategy was developed in partnership with all 16 hospital and health services so we can have an equitable distribution of ICT funding across the state.

One element is a greater use of telehealth facilities. While we will continue to use telehealth facilities to bring health services to remote areas, telehealth can also be used to meet the high volume of demand in regional Queensland. Through the implementation of the eHealth initiatives detailed in our strategy, we anticipate approximately 1,000 jobs will be created. The strategy also addresses risks which are already in the system but have not been addressed. It also ensures a greater level of integration between both public and private health service providers and the community. We see a large role for the private sector in delivering some of the innovations. We want to find a way to partner with the private sector to find ways to deliver reform for less. What we have provided with this eHealth strategy is certainty for the private sector. We have a plan for the way forward in eHealth—a plan that will ensure Queensland delivers a patient-centric system that enables different models of care as close to home as possible.

Mr Speaker, every 10 minutes, someone in Australia has a stroke. Stroke is the second most common cause of death, as well as a major cause of long-term disability and dependence in adults. This week is National Stroke Week, and I would urge honourable members to do what they can to make

their constituents aware of the dangers of strokes. I myself will be having my blood pressure checked on Friday at the Logan Central Plaza shopping centre, right in the heart of Woodridge, as part of National Stroke Week.

Opposition member interjected.

Mr DICK: Thank you. I take the interjection from the member opposite. When I checked last time, the ticker was very strong. I urge all honourable members, including the member for Mermaid Beach, to support National Stroke Week.