

SUBJECT: LMM 23/11/2021 - SAVE NEWCASTLE'S AFTER HOURS GP SERVICE

MOTION

- 1 Notes with concern the Federal Morrison Liberal Government's decision to close the Hunter Primary Care (HPC) GP Access After Hours Service (GPAAH) at the Calvary Mater Hospital, and reducing opening hours at the remaining four clinic across the Hunter Region;
- 2 Notes that 15,000 people may be left without access to vital medical care;
- 3 Commends Federal Member for Newcastle, Sharon Claydon MP, for fighting to save our after-hours GP service, noting that a petition of more than 11,000 signatures of concerned Newcastle residents against the closure of this crucial service has been tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament;
- 4 Writes to the Prime Minister, the Hon. Scott Morrison MP, and the Minister for Health, the Hon. Greg Hunt MP, calling on them to reverse this decision, and restore the full services of the HPC GP Access After Hours Service in Newcastle and the Hunter.

BACKGROUND

Morrison Government cuts to Medicare forces GP after hours service to close

Sharon Claydon MP Federal Member for Newcastle

The Morrison Government's continuous cuts and freezes to Medicare has forced Hunter Primary Care (HPC) to close the GP Access After Hours Service (GPAAH) at the Calvary Mater Hospital and reduce opening hours at the remaining four clinics across the region.

This reduction in services will be devastating news for up to 15,000 people who will be left without access to vital medical care.

The GPAAH Service reduces unnecessary emergency department presentations and hospitalisations, saving the health system approximately \$21.7 million every year. But, these changes will dramatically increase pressure on our already over stretched and under resourced emergency departments.

After six long years of Medicare rebate freezes and recent cuts to bulk-billing incentives by the Morrison Government, HPC has been forced to make the impossible decision to reduce their services to families across the Newcastle Hunter region.

In August, HPC pleaded with the Morrison Government to provide the funding needed to retain the full operation of their services, but the Minister for Health, Greg Hunt simply gave them the cold shoulder and said no.

This has been an essential service for tens of thousands of Newcastle families who rely upon bulk-billing GP services to access the healthcare they need, when they need it.

With so few bulk-billing doctors in Newcastle, any further loss of services will have a huge impact on these families already faced with high out-of-pocket costs.

Not only is the Morrison Government's lack of support unacceptable, it is grossly irresponsible in the middle of a global pandemic.

At a time when the Federal Government should be investing in Medicare and increasing health services to regional Australia, the Morrison Government is doing the exact opposite.

Newcastle deserves better than a government determined to undermine our world-class healthcare system.

Save Newcastle's After Hours GP Service!

**Save Newcastle's after
hours GP service**

Sign the petition today!



The Morrison Government's continuous cuts and freezes to Medicare has forced Hunter Primary Care (HPC) to make the difficult decision to close the GP Access After Hours Service (GPAAH) at the Calvary Mater Hospital from Christmas Eve and reduce opening hours at the remaining four clinics across the region.

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Sign the Save Newcastle's After Hours GP Service petition:

https://www.sharonclaydon.com/save_newcastles_after_hours_gp_service

ATTACHMENTS

Nil