
ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS
MEDIA RELEASE



Surgeons respond to appointment of new CALHN CEO

Tuesday 4 September, 2012

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons has noted with interest the appointment of Doctor David Panter to the position of CEO of the Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN).

The College's South Australian Regional Chair, Mr Peter Subramaniam, said that Dr Panter is the chief architect of the state's healthcare reforms, including the conceptual development of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital. Dr Panter's proposed reforms will have an ongoing effect on the delivery of healthcare and surgical services to the people of South Australia.

"It is a matter of public record that many organisations representing clinicians across South Australia have voiced significant concerns about aspects of these proposed changes," Mr Subramaniam said.

"Whilst many of these changes are exciting developments, the College of Surgeons remains concerned about their impact on the delivery of surgical care. Central to this, is the impact on surgical services within the CALHN of the proposed closure of intensive care services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH).

"Moreover, downsizing of the surgical capability of the QEH is likely to have an impact on training positions within that hospital. This will threaten the viability of surgical services into the future.

"The College remains unconvinced that the new Royal Adelaide Hospital and the planned upgrade of the Lyell McEwan Hospital will be able to absorb the extra surgical workload created by the downsizing of the QEH," Mr Subramaniam said.

"Although there has been a significant and necessary focus on our crowded emergency departments, the College has also voiced concerns about proposed changes to the delivery of specialist outpatient services. Whilst these proposals are currently in the consultative phase, the College notes that one of the purposes of this consultation is to achieve 'expenditure reduction, inclusive of the reduction in activity in order to realise a savings target within the CALHN'.

"The College reiterates its strong view that specialist outpatient services need to be maintained within the public healthcare system, in order to deliver a high standard of surgical care under the supervision of specialist surgeons capable of identifying the need for surgery and capable of delivering appropriate and prompt surgical care. Any move towards privatisation of specialist surgical outpatient services will not only limit the general public's access to such care but will also adversely impact on the training of surgeons in our public hospitals.

"The College remains committed to a constructive process of consultation with the state government to ensure these concerns are addressed and to safeguard the delivery of the best possible surgical care to the people of South Australia," Mr Subramaniam said.

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