



Hill forces man to suffer for two years

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A Port Lincoln man fears he will die before he can undergo surgery for a knee reconstruction and hip replacement, Shadow Health Minister Vickie Chapman said.

“This man, who relies on painkillers and is suffering constantly, has been told he will have to wait two years before he can have this surgery because Whyalla Hospital only has a budget for 52 joint operations a year”, Ms Chapman said.

“Currently there are 450 people on the Whyalla Hospital waiting list, how many other people across the state are being forced to suffer by Minister Hill? Regional health is going down the gurgler!”

Member for Flinders, Liz Penfold said she was appalled by Minister Hill’s reaction to her constituent’s plight.

“Minister Hill just doesn’t care about how long hospital waiting lists are. This man’s condition has been assessed as ‘non-urgent’ so the Minister isn’t worried. Waiting lists can continue to grow but so long as patients’ needs are deemed ‘non-urgent’ he doesn’t care.

“The Health Minister thinks throwing chicken feed at the growing waiting list at Whyalla Hospital is enough. Clearly it is not enough”, Mrs Penfold said.

“In Parliament Minister Hill said the Rann Government had allocated an extra \$162,000 for joint surgery at Whyalla Hospital.

“Considering this type of orthopaedic operation can cost \$20,000 and there are 450 people on the waiting list, \$162,000 won’t go very far at all.

“The Minister also has the gall to blame the community members who sit on individual regional hospital boards for the increasing waiting lists.

“In Parliament last week Minister Hill said:

“I would like to point out to the member for Flinders, that at the moment in South Australia we have a whole range of country hospitals that are run by individual country boards which make decisions about a whole range of things in terms of the way those hospitals operate.” Hansard, August 31, 2006.

“The people on these boards generously give up time for their local hospitals but they have no real control over where the hospitals’ money goes!

“This is just an example of an arrogant Minister blaming community members for an unhealthy health system, while people in need of treatment are left to suffer.”