Minister Fails to Protect Nurses

This week’s attack on an Alice Springs Hospital Emergency Department nurse is simply not acceptable, when all she was doing was doing her job, and this being the third time she has been attacked in one year, according to Shadow Minister for Health Dr Richard Lim.

“The Minister for Health has been made aware that there is violence against our staff, however he appears deaf to the calls to take action. Maybe he should put his hearing aid back in," Dr Lim said.

Last year, after a spate of violence against nurses, I appealed to the Minister to provide better protection for our nurses to prevent them being harassed, spat on and physically assaulted.

“In response, the Minister facetiously replied that perhaps he himself should stand guard outside hospitals and screen all those who entered.

“I am appalled that this has occurred again. The protection that has been put in place has obviously not been adequate and the Minister needs to start taking this matter seriously.

“I have said before that our nurses, the frontline health professionals, and in fact all essential services personnel, must be afforded protection. The government must be unequivocal with both a zero tolerance message and decisive action.

“They should be able to perform their duty, helping needy people, without fear for their physical well-being.

“The government must open its eyes to this problem, take it seriously and be resolute in protecting our public servants.

“Health professionals in particular, are aware that some patients, while in an uncontrollable state of mind through their illness and without malice, may be violent, and strike out. In these instances, health carers will deal with the matter in a professional manner.

“It is in instances, where patients or even visitors to the hospital, in malice and without provocation strike out at the health professional, that is unacceptable.

“Nurses have complained. The Nurses Federation has complained. When will the government act to protect them?” said Dr Lim.

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