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General practice being short-changed by health funding agencies.

GenPro, the General Practice Owners Association, whose objectives include supporting the sustainability and viability of members businesses and the services they provide, has today published a guide for its members in response to claims that already stretched front-line general practices are being unfairly pressured into subsidising new services as well as services being developed to help reduce demand for hospital-based care.



The Chair of GenPro, Dr Tim Malloy (pictured), says, “Owner-operator general practices are being increasingly bullied and taken advantage of by a health system which expects general practice to pick-up more and more workload without the appropriate funding to do so. This is increasingly the case where ballooning deficits are being incurred by District Health Boards (DHBs) in the running of their local hospitals.”

The guide, entitled “At what cost?” is intended to help general practice providers better understand the costs of services they are being asked to provide, or accommodate, as the Government and DHBs seek to transfer more services out of hospitals into community settings, or, as they develop new community services aimed at preventing hospital admissions.

“General practice providers are increasingly being accused of standing in the way of improving services for patients if they try to ensure the funding provided is sufficient to cover the actual costs incurred in providing the service – services which are being developed at the request of their local DHB or Primary Health Organisations (PHO), and,” Dr Malloy explained, “being repeatedly short-changed means the whole general practice service becomes unsustainable and unviable in the longer term and patients will end up losing services rather than gaining them”.

GenPro believes that as privately run businesses being asked to support what is right for patients, general practices need to also consider what is right for the sustainability and viability of their businesses to ensure that they can continue to provide such essential services for their communities into the future, because, as Dr Malloy says, “They can’t thank us when we’re gone”.

ENDS

Further information can be obtained from:

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The GenPro members guide “At what cost?” is downloadable from the GenPro website
<http://genpro.org.nz/docs/atwhatcost.pdf>