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MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate release

4 August 2006

Pensioners appalled at hospital waiting list treatment

"CPSA is concerned that hospital waiting lists in NSW are being used as a political football", said CPSA State Secretary Bob Jay today.

"The NSW Government is trying to make out hospital waiting lists are getting shorter. The NSW Opposition is trying to make out that they are longer. Last night we saw the NSW Premier doing a hospital walk-around boasting how well things are going; today the NSW Opposition leader puts a media release saying the Premier is lying.

"The truth is that neither are addressing the real rub of the problem of hospital waiting lists: the time people have to wait to see a specialist that will put them on a hospital waiting list.

"CPSA is aware of a case where a middle-aged Disability Support Pensioner had to wait five months before seeing a cancer specialist, who packed him off to hospital that same day for a colonoscopy and saved his life", said Bob Jay.

"He could have died and everybody in the health system and the political system would have washed their hands off it. It's probably something that happens every day of the week", said Edna Stevenson (82), the Pensioner's mother.

"CPSA calls on the NSW Government and the NSW Opposition to commit to replacing current hospital waiting lists published by NSW Health with waiting lists that show the waiting time for each procedure from the moment a patient is referred by their GP to the moment their hospital procedure is carried out", said Bob Jay.

"The NSW Government and the NSW Opposition need to commit to setting up a NSW Health program that actively manages the waiting time from referral to medical procedure in the same way as NSW Health manages the waiting time from consultation with a medical specialist to the hospital procedure."

ENDS

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