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MEDIA RELEASE

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FORCING MORE AUSTRALIANS ONTO PUBLIC HOSPITAL WAITING LISTS IS NOT AN “INSIGNIFICANT” MATTER

In introducing legislation into the Parliament this morning to means-test the 30% Rebate on private health insurance, the Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, has admitted that her policy will force more Australians onto public hospital waiting lists.

“Labor has conceded that it’s plan to dismantle the 30% Rebate will result in more Australians relying on the public hospital system,” said Dr Michael Armitage, CEO of the Australian Health Insurance Association.

“The Minister has insensitively suggested that the 8,000 additional public hospital admissions the Government estimates will occur as a result of the policy as ***‘insignificant’***.”

“I’m sure Minister Roxon’s State and Territory colleagues, who run our public hospitals, will be very interested in her attempt to cost-shift the responsibility of people’s care to them, particularly her description that the *‘impact of the measure (on public hospital admissions) will be insignificant’*.”

“Any measure that places more people on our public hospital waiting lists is bad health policy. Labor has not thought through the consequences of its policy: they have been misleading in suggesting only 25,000 people are likely to leave private health insurance.

“The AHIA has estimated that close to 1 million Australians are likely to drop or downgrade their private cover as a direct result of Labor’s plan to dismantle the 30% Rebate.

“Less people insured means increased premiums for everyone else remaining in private health insurance, including the 8 million Australians with private cover who earn less than \$75,000 (singles) and \$150,000 (couples),” said Dr Armitage.

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