

New Zealand **Doctor**

Rata Aotearoa

DHB's 'free care' new entrant feared as threat to Hāwera practice viability

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Hāwera has a new general practice, funded by the Taranaki DHB.....

Hāwera independent GP Keith Blayney fears local practices' viability will be at risk



Comments

Keith Blayney

Thursday 04/02/2021

Yet again we have a "top down" management solution imposed that counter-intuitively makes the retention and attraction of GPs in a very hard to staff area much worse. Just like the band-aid idea of VLCA clinics may have helped some low income patients access GP services, it disadvantaged those who wanted continuity of care by their trusted GP who could or would not become VLCA funded and unfairly made GP visits cheaper for high income patients of VLCA practices.

This is the same DHB that withdrew Rural funding support for my independent (non-PHO) practice because they were unable to control how I practised and would not accept that clinical audit is the function of the RNZCGP and not the DHB, yet they are willing to pay well over 10 times (on staff alone) that rural support (which was supporting access by low income patients to my practice) on a hospital based model that fragments care and so far is attracting high income patients. At best this project will be able to show DHBs and indirectly the Government how much it really costs to run a primary GP practice but a true analysis of the costs (staff - including management, equipment and accommodation) will undoubtedly not be performed or not be revealed.

Politically, we hear the catch-cry that health care should be "for all New Zealanders" but funding primary care based on ownership, organisational type and locality of practice has been shown over the last two decades to create inequity, not be very effective at having funding follow the need and most importantly has failed to attract NZ medical graduates to become GPs as they feel undervalued and over-controlled. Sustainability of quality primary care is the issue facing New Zealand and so training, attracting and retaining consultant (Vocationally Registered) General Practitioners who are valued and trusted is the answer not hospital based clinics.

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