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Level 2, 410 Collins St. Melbourne ph: 03 9600 4744 ipa@ipa.org.au www.ipa.org.au

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WA PUBLIC HOSPITALS HAVE MORE BUREAUCRATS AND FEWER NURSES

WA PATIENTS IN DARK ON SAFETY AND QUALITY

WA public hospitals have more bureaucrats and fewer nurses than the average public hospital in Australia according to a major report to be released today in Perth by the Institute of Public Affairs.

The independent report, commissioned by the Mannkal Economic Education Foundation, also analyses a recent government report that finds that WA does not publish data on the safety and quality of care at individual hospitals online.

The report finds that only 41% of the WA public hospital workforce are nurses. This compares with an average of 44% across Australia. WA also appears to have fewer diagnostic and other health professionals with only 12% of the WA public hospital workforce in this role compared to 15% on average across Australia and 20% in Victorian public hospitals.

The author of the report, IPA Research Fellow Ross Fox said, "WA public hospitals proportionally have fewer nurses than most other public hospitals in Australia."

"WA patients deserve access to basic up-to-date information that patients in other states can already access."

"WA patients may well ask, why it is that a public patient in the ACT can go online and see waiting times by specific surgeons in specific public hospitals but this information is not available to WA patients?"

Taking the Pulse – Reform Initiatives for the WA Health System outlines four reform initiatives that the WA Government could pursue to improve health outcomes for every Western Australian and to lead Australia in health care reform. These include to:

- continue WA's leadership in the use of private hospitals for the treatment of public patients
- increase transparency and accountability by making all performance information, down to an individual hospital level, available online
- empower patients and ensure higher standards of care by facilitating a system, possibly voluntary for patients, to create electronic patient records that can be accessed by all healthcare providers and patients in WA; and
- examine a model to pool government and private health funding to enhance health outcomes, minimise waiting times and improve cost effectiveness of the system.

Ross Fox said, "Electronic patient records would deliver real benefits to WA residents."

"If residents of WA have the misfortune to turn up at an emergency department unconscious they can't yet be confident that a comprehensive medical record would be available to the health professionals treating them."

For Further Information

Ross Fox Institute of Public Affairs 0422 583 117

For details about the launch of the report today in Perth contact Cassandra Brennan, 0402 845 459.

Taking the Pulse – Reform Initiatives for the WA Health System is available at www.ipa.org.au.