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Transcript: AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid talks to Allison Langdon and Karl Stefanovic, Channel 9's Today show, 22 April, 2022.

Subject: The crisis in health and what Labor and LNP are promising for health in the federal election. Interview includes Victorian emergency physician Dr Stephen Parnis.

KARL STEFANOVIC: Let's bring in AMA President Dr Omar Khorshid in Perth, and emergency physician Dr Stephen Parnis in Melbourne. Good morning doctors, thank you for your time this morning. Dr Khorshid, to you first of all - the AMA says urgent care centres are not the solution. What is?

OMAR KHORSHID: Well, what we need is a solution for our epidemic of chronic disease in the community. That means modernising our Medicare system and making sure that GPs can look after those things properly in the community and take the pressure on off our hospitals. And of course the other thing we need is both sides of politics to get real, to understand that the ambulance ramping crisis is actually affecting people's lives on a daily basis now in Australia. They've got to find a solution to work with the states, properly fund those hospitals and make sure that every Aussie who gets sick knows that when they go to the hospital, they're going to get the care they need, when they need it.

ALLISON LANGDON: Hey, Dr Parnis, because you've been on the front line during the entire pandemic, we've spoken to you many, many times. We know how exhausted nurses and doctors are, emergency departments are overwhelmed. What, in your mind, needs to change to keep the system alive?

STEPHEN PARNIS: Well, it needs a whole number of things, Ally. It needs better resourcing, and part of that means a better financial contribution from the Federal Government for hospitals. It needs better support for staffing, some of that in the short-term to ensure that staff can have time away - there is no substitute for that when you've got thousands of people who are burned out. And you also need the support of systems that take away pressure from hospitals, as Omar said, with general practice, but also in the area of aged care which puts an enormous amount of pressure on emergency departments and inpatient wards.

KARL STEFANOVIC: Well, the talk about getting more nurses into aged care, it's valid but is it practical, do you think?

STEPHEN PARNIS: Well, it's essential. Unless we do that, we are going to continue to see avoidable presentations of things like pressure sores, of unnecessary hospital presentations, of inappropriate suffering for some of the most frail people in our community.

ALLISON LANGDON: And look, Dr Khorshid, just very quickly too - I mean, a score card for both parties here?

OMAR KHORSHID: Look, we are early in the campaign still and both parties are nowhere near where they need to be on health. Both would score an F at this stage, but we're really hopeful, we're talking to both of them, that we'll hear more about health as the campaign goes on. In particular, in those areas of general practice, primary care and, of course, the crisis in our hospitals. If the parties can't do that, they're not going to be taken seriously by voters who are interested in health, as you guys have pointed out, when it comes to the ballot box on 21 May.

KARL STEFANOVIC: Good to talk to you guys, thank you so much for your time and expertise. We really appreciate it.

ALLISON LANGDON: Thank you.

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