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Questioning the direction of MSD policy

Tim Walker Nelson

Letter

from Tim Walker Nelson

While I am not a medic (that's my wife), I frequently read and enjoy New Zealand Doctor.

One article though that really surprised me was one reporting on a Ministry of Social Development employee, David Bratt, entitled "Harms lurk for benefit addicts" (New Zealand Doctor, 1 August) to an RNZCGP convention.

As to why sickness numbers have increased, Dr Bratt implies that either doctors are colluding with their patients or that people are deliberately choosing to be unemployed.

He seems to take no cognisance that unemployment is a real problem and views those without work as all malingers.

That this approach is taken by a government bureaucrat who is principal health advisor to the Ministry of Social Development - and not the spokesperson for some lunatic fringe political party, eg, ACT - is strange indeed.

It has all the fervour of the ideologue combined with a minimum of understanding. It would be helpful if a person in his position could be part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

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