Nurses fight to save ward

CALL TO SCRAP CLOSURE PLAN

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CLOSING the paediatric ward at Modbury Hospital would prevent nurses from supporting local children, the nurses’ union says.

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (SA) Union industrial manager Rob Bonner said members wanted the ward to remain open to ensure north-eastern families had an “adequate and local healthcare service”.

“An overwhelming number of our members said they were concerned with the services that would be available for young families in the north should the ward close,” Mr Bonner said.

“Nurses want to be able to provide ongoing care for local children, but that sense of connection would be lost if the inpatient service was moved to the Lyell McEwin Hospital at Elizabeth Vale.

“The reason people work as paediatric nurses in an inpatient unit is because they think they can make a difference to the lives of children and their families but if they need to move to the LMH they would no longer be able to do that.”

The State Government is considering a proposal to close Modbury’s paediatric wing. A children’s emergency department would still operate at Modbury, but a child requiring an overnight stay would be transferred to the LMH.

Mr Bonner said nurses feared families would bypass Modbury, reducing the need for paediatric nurses.

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Numbers ‘wrong’ – union

PATIENT STATISTICS HIGHER

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He said nurses were also disputing some of the information in a June report from the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network, detailing reasons behind the proposal.

“We believe the information was wrong or at least questionable because no evidence has been provided in terms of how they obtained the numbers that were put out in the papers,” Mr Bonner said.

“They said the ward has an average of 2.5 inpatients a day, but the correct amount is 4.5. We are asking for the release of information that details where they got the information from.”

Meantime, Northern Adelaide Local Health Network chief executive Margot Mains gave a presentation on the proposal to Tea Tree Gully Council at last week’s meeting. She told the meeting the ward was under-utilised and consolidating services would “result in more efficient patient quality”.

Ms Mains said in an emailed statement that “all submissions and feedback would be reviewed and considered with responses provided in due course,” but did not respond to claims by the union that information in the document was incorrect.