

21st May 2010

Inquiry into Caring for Older Australians
Productivity Commission,
GPO Box 1428,
Canberra City, ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam,

Community Aged Care Services form an integral part of a broader comprehensive Aged Care Services, including acute and subacute (rehabilitation) care of our elderly citizens.

The budget for Aged Care had traditionally been part of a hospital's global budget. Over the years, as hospitals grappled with budget deficits, Aged Care Services had been a target for service and staff reduction, affecting Community Aged Care Services in particular, as they are often perceived as "non core" activities for hospitals.

Community Aged Care Services have a pivotal role in supporting elderly patients with chronic and complex problems remain in the community; delay or prevent admission to residential age care facilities and when this becomes necessary, facilitate the transition. Addressing patient needs in the community sometime avoid presentation to hospital. Community Aged Care Services also support hospital discharges by providing ongoing care in the community setting.

To safeguard the integrity of Community Aged Care Services, its budget must be quarantined so it cannot be a target to offset hospital deficits. Therefore, whatever model of funding is proposed, it should ensure Community Aged Care Services remain a viable component of a more comprehensive Aged Care Services.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr.) Ben Chua
Aged Care Physician
New South Wales