

To whom it may concern,

26/07/2010

This is my submission to the Aged care Inquiry.

Having spent well over thirty years in different positions within the industry as Assistant Nurse, WHSO, Union Official and human being who cares i decided to pass my insights onto this inquiry. I wish to remain anonymous as the aged care industry has always attacked and penalised anyone that dares to speak out..

1. All government departments and agencies have failed in the past to support the Nurses and elderly patients on a proper caring basis, e.g. Government departments, Unions, Workcover, Workplace health and safety, Aged care providers(especially),nursing boards, Accreditation boards, police, relatives and residents were ALL aware for many ,many years that this disgraceful treatment of our elderly was occurring but it was kept hidden under a lid of silence.

2. I myself was ordered on a few occasions by Matrons and managers not to speak up...with a warning if Accreditation was in progress, or an investigation was imminent. The main duty of all nurses in aged care was to pass the accreditation no matter what! i have been intimidated, harassed, threatened and ignored by authorities for most of my working time spent in these caring roles. I can say that I (and a few others) spoke up in spite of all this and still no one listened or took us seriously.

3. The result is now there is a crisis in aged care moving rapidly to a critical state...why?? Because most aged care nurses are well over 50 years of age ,have been silenced for most of there working life and treated unfairly by all. Recently there is a trend by the press to start the blame game towards nursing staff, this will push more nurses to retire earlier ,creating a bigger crisis.

4. Working conditions and pay for nurses in aged care can only be described as neglect. Most nurses are constantly commenting to me and each other that their children and grandchildren working at Coles or Bunnings etc. are earning more.

5. Care of the elderly. Why have all the stakeholders Government, Aged care providers, Private and charity organisations etc, ignored or refused to implement a STAFF to PATIENT RATIO??? It is not unusual for nurses to be working 60+ patients to 2.5 nurses on a shift with 1 registered nurse. I'm sure that if the inquiry was to investigate this area that they would be shocked. For example if there was a fire in a nursing home at night generally 3-4 assistant nurses and 1 Registered nurse is the normal standard on duty for 100 residents! I could add a lot of incidents that occurred in my time in aged care but it would only result in a book of neglect by all parties ,so, i will try to point out the main points that need repair NOW.

1. Staff to patient ratios to be fixed urgently.
2. Nurses pay and conditions to be improved dramatically.
3. Bullying and intimidation to be stopped and investigated.
4. The Residents going into nursing homes have more nursing and physical needs but the paperwork is increasing and the nursing staff is remaining at the same level. obviously this is putting more pressure on this already overburdened situation.
5. Majority of staff in Aged Care over 50 years of age. These staff are currently holding back the dam. The dam is nearly at bursting stage. Where is the replacements NOW???

(Anonymous)