

Caring for Older Australians

Post Draft Submission.

Glenda Addicott.

In response to the Commission's Draft Report I wish to comment on issues raised specifically on page 365 regarding the Commission's contention that there "does not seem to be a need to introduce mandatory staffing requirements" because the accreditation process (supported by the complaints process) should rectify staffing "inadequacies".

Introduction.

As a Div 1 Registered Nurse ,who has worked in this "industry" for 23 years , I cannot agree with this optimistic assumption .

For the past 11 years I have been writing letters to Victorian newspapers on this important issue and include 2 of many published letters below. I also instigated a petition relating to this topic, signed by 18,021 concerned Australian citizens, and tabled in Federal Parliament in early 2001, receiving more than 600 phone calls from distressed and angry relatives in the process.

1. Auditing Process.

Could the Commission articulate the methodology used by Auditors to assess and correlate High Care resident care needs with the number and skills mix of on duty staff, at Accreditation visits and

Is the Commission thereby convinced, as a result of Accreditation visit audits that Aged Care Facilities ARE providing an "adequate number of appropriately trained staff" as the Aged Care Act (1997) requires?

2. High Care resident to trained staff ratios.

Is the Commission aware that an elderly patient with multiple co morbidities may be one of 5(five) patients in the care of a Division 1 Registered Nurse in an Acute Medical ward one day----and one of up to 60(sixty) residents in the care of either a Div2(Medication Endorsed) Enrolled Nurse or Division 1 Registered Nurse in an Aged Care Facility ,the next?

3. Complaints Process.

Is the Commission concerned at the rate of acceptance of registered complaints against Aged Care Facilities? eg. In the period 2007—2008, out of 7,496 complaints ,only 13.7% were accepted, representing 930 complainants. In 2009-2010, out of

8,055, 11.6% were accepted, or 931. In other words ,complainants have only one chance in 8 of a successful complaint and

Is the Commission concerned at the number of complaints being made against Facilities---namely 23,000 since 2007 alone?

Conclusion

In contrast to the Commission's Draft Report of January 2011, I contend that unless and until a mandated number of Division 1 Registered Nurses with years (not weeks) of theory and practical experience is employed to correlate with High Care residents' extensive medical and complex nursing needs ,the community cannot be convinced that it is meeting it's Duty of Care to such residents.

Respectfully,

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