

SUBMISSION to Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport Inquiry into the Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratio Disclosure) Bill 2018

Subsection 9-3C (1)

My husband's aged care facility has 85 residents. The facility is divided into three separate units; High Care, Dementia Care, Low Care. The care needs of residents can vary greatly according to the current population of residents in each unit. Staff are rostered on a needs basis and according to three shifts per day. To show the **skill mix over 24 hours**, the "day" referred to in subsection (4) **needs to be broken up into working shifts eg Morning/Afternoon/Overnight**; for example 7am to 3pm; 3pm to 11pm; 11pm to 7am.

The Staff on the **weekend** at my husband's facility have a **different skill mix** to the skill mix of staff on duty Monday to Friday. The only way to show this varying skill mix in this Bill is to have **staff ratios for TWO days reported quarterly, 1 weekday and 1 weekend day**.

Subsection 9-3C (2)

I applaud the inclusion in the Bill of the phrase '**each category of staff member**' as this will show the **facts of skill mix at a facility** at a certain point in time. Will there be any **analysis** of this skill mix data **available to the public**? It would be **valuable for consumers** to know not only the skill mix for my husband's facility but also how this skill mix compares with similar aged care facilities throughout Australia.

Subsection 9-3C (3)

Part-time staff, casual staff and "floaters" all need to be counted. I have often seen casual staff in attendance on the weekend. There is a **definite trend towards part-time staff and casual staff in the Dementia Unit**. At my husband's facility there is also a staff member called 'floater', an enrolled nurse, who "floats" between the three separate units on a needs basis. I think the **'floater' only works on the night shift**

Subsection 9-3C (4)

No prior notification is given to aged care facilities for visits by the Quality Assurance Team. My recommendation is that **each quarter, TWO RETROSPECTIVE DATES (one week day and one weekend day)** be sent to all Australian facilities to report their staff to resident ratios.

SUBMISSION to Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport (continued)

Subsection 9-3C (5)

There are not many Cert IV people in the industry. Cert III is a more common qualification. **Certificate III needs to be added to the list of categories** in this Bill.

Personal Care Attendants do most of the hands-on nursing and indirect care in aged care facilities. Since they are the most visible and accessible staff on duty, some of their time each shift is also spent addressing the concerns of the families of residents. **The category 'personal care attendants' needs to be broken down into a level system according to qualifications and/OR experience eg Senior Carer, Junior Carer.** This will hopefully result in the establishment of a **system of seniority amongst carers** where a carer can be **recognized and paid for the leadership role** I have often seen in practise where an older or more experienced carer will voluntarily act as a "Buddy" to a younger or less experienced carer. In addition, the role **Senior Carer, could also encompass the task of being the liaison person between carers and management.** I have noticed a lack of initiative among Junior Carers due perhaps to cultural differences, fear of losing their job, and time constraints.

'Allied Health Staff' needs to be broken down into **Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist.** The government funds 20 minutes per week of Allied Health time per resident. **I have seen the wellbeing, mobility and pain relief benefits to individual residents** of this 1 to 1 allocation of time. Allied Health Staff also conduct group exercise sessions and I've seen how much enjoyment and mobility benefit these sessions give some residents who have often spent a lifetime playing some sport.

The category 'other staff members' needs to be more specific. I strongly recommend that **'other staff members' be changed to Leisure Staff and Kitchen Staff.**

Leisure Staff and their programmes do benefit the residents greatly in terms of distraction, improved wellbeing and quality of life. **Leisure Staff cater for the social needs of residents as opposed to nursing needs.**

Food preparation is a very important task in aged care. To cater for the varied nutritional needs of residents in aged care **takes planning and adequate, qualified staffing.** The meal delivery system also needs to be efficient. The catering at my husband's facility is generally considered to be consistently of a good standard.

Subsection 9-3C (8)

I applaud the setting of a **maximum word limit of 250 words** for a provider's explanation of ratios. This will help me, the **consumer, to compare one facility with another with relative ease.** My recommendation is that **sub-section 8 be used by the provider to comment on varied care needs in each unit of their facility and how this affected the reported ratios.**

