

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

21 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000567

Spot checks in Victoria and New South Wales

Spoken

Hansard Page number: 17

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: Commissioner, how many problems have you identified in those 74 spot checks Victoria?

Ms Anderson: I don't have a number that I can offer you. In some instances, there have been deficiencies in practice and we have circled back to each of those. We give on-the-spot feedback, because it is essentially a continuous improvement initiative, and then we give them written advice after we've done the visit that they take on board and address. In some instances, there may be further action that we will take. This is quite new, as you can imagine. It's several weeks old and it will continue to develop.

Senator SIEWERT: Could you take this on notice, please. I understood it was 74 in Victoria and 41 in New South Wales; is that correct?

Ms Anderson: Yes.

Senator SIEWERT: Could you take on notice how many problems in those 74 and 41 you found? Are you intending to do this across Australia? My deep concern is the preparedness across Australia for outbreaks in other areas. Given that we know the preparations that were done that Senator Gallagher has asked a number of questions about were inadequate, where are we at across Australia in terms of infectious disease control, spot checks and self-assessment? You said last time I asked that you were changing the process around self-assessment. Where are we at there for national preparedness?

Answer:

As at 19 August 2020, the Commission had completed 115 spot checks across Victoria and New South Wales. By 21 August, this number had grown to 136.

Of the spot checks completed by 21 August, key issues identified during those visits included gaps in outbreak management plans, appropriate use of PPE and use of other preventative infection control strategies.

The Commission is undertaking follow up regulatory activities with a number of these services.

As at 2 September 2020, spot checks have commenced in all states and territories.

In line with the Commission's COVID regulatory response, the Commission continues to monitor and support aged care providers in their infection control preparedness. Specifically on infection control, the Commission's actions across August include:

- Undertaking spot checks and other infection control related visits.
- Requiring providers to undertake necessary improvements where gaps are identified.
- Undertaking compliance action where there are significant concerns about consumer care and services.
- Publishing learnings, resources and information about infection control practices on our website.
- Undertaking a second self-assessment survey with residential aged care services.
- Undertaking comprehensive risk analysis to ensure our regulatory activities are targeting the services of greatest risk.
- Collaborating with the Department of Health and States and Territories in a partnership model to support the aged care sector's preparedness for a COVID-19 outbreak.