

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

7 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000432

Question Subject: Additional funding for both residential aged care facilities and home care providers

Question type: Written

Senator: Stirling Griff

Question:

1. On 20 March 2020 the Prime Minister announced temporary increases in additional funding for both residential aged care facilities and home care providers due to the impacts of COVID-19 on the aged care sector.
 - a. Prior to the announcement on 20 March 2020, did the Government undertake any modelling or analysis to determine the likely increased costs to residential aged care facilities due to COVID-19? If so, please provide a copy of the report.
 - b. Has the Government undertaken any subsequent modelling or analysis to determine whether the temporary increases in additional funding are sufficient to meet the costs incurred by providers as a consequence of the pandemic?
 - c. Does the Government intend to review the temporary increases in additional funding for both residential and home care providers and if so, when?
 - d. Has the Government allowed for reporting requirements on how the funding announced on 20 March 2020 has been spent, if not, why not?

Answer:

The Department has undertaken a range of analysis to understand the additional costs to the aged care sector as a result of COVID-19. This analysis has drawn on inputs from providers, peak bodies, as well as specific analysis commissioned by the Department. Analysis of the ongoing impacts continue and measures continue to be developed and considered by Government as needed.

Residential aged care providers will be required to provide information in their annual returns due in October 2020 regarding the additional funding that they received and the additional costs they incurred in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of their residents during COVID-19.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

7 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000436

How many eligible staff receive paid pandemic leave and who will cover the cost of this leave:

Written

Senator: Stirling Griff

Question:

8. (a) Has the Government undertaken any analysis to determine what percentage of workers in the aged care industry will be eligible for the paid pandemic leave pursuant to the decision of the Fair Work Commission?

(b) If so, can the Government provide a breakdown of how many personal care workers, enrolled nurses, registered nurses, allied health workers, cleaners, catering staff and administrative staff are eligible to receive paid pandemic leave as a consequence of the decision by the Fair Work Commission?

9. The Fair Work Commission has ruled that aged care workers under three awards - the Aged Care Award, the Nurses Award and the Health Professionals Award - will be entitled to two weeks' paid leave during the pandemic effective from 29 July 2020 and lasting for three months.

Has the Government made a decision as to who will cover the cost for paid pandemic leave for aged care workers?

Answer:

8. (a) The department has reviewed a range of data sources and advice from the sector to understand the level of award coverage across the residential aged care sector. While there is some variation in figures depending on the nature of worker and services captured, the *ABS, Employee Earnings and Hours, Cat. No. 6306.0, May 2018* shows that in the Residential Care Services sub-industry, which includes those employed in the categories of Aged Care Residential Services and Other Residential Care Services, approximately 25 per cent are on awards and other instruments (for example, individual contracts) and 75 per cent are on enterprise agreements.

(b) On the basis of this material and using 2016 Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey headcount data as a base, the Department estimates that approximately 60,000, residential aged care workers are on award conditions. This would include direct care workers and non-direct care workers, such as administrative staff, cooks, cleaners and ancillary workers.

The 2016 census and survey head count data would also suggest around 9,500 nurses (registered and enrolled), 27,000 Personal Care Workers and 1,800 allied health workers work under award conditions in residential aged care. It is not possible to dissect the occupational numbers beyond total non-direct care workers, which would equate to around 20,500 in number.

9. As employers, it is the responsibility of providers and employment agencies to cover the cost of paid pandemic leave for aged care workers that are on Aged Care Award, the Nurses Award and the Health Professionals Award.

Notwithstanding this, the Support for Aged Care Workers in COVID-19 Grant Program will provide funding to residential aged care providers located in designated hotspots to implement the decision by the Fair Work Commission in relation to Paid Pandemic Leave.

The grant program also provides funding to residential aged care and home care providers with staff located in designated hotspots who are not to attend work because they have been experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, have been diagnosed as COVID-19 positive, require testing or are subject to self-isolation or quarantine requirements.