

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000810

OUTCOME: 6 - Ageing and Aged Care

Topic: 24/7 Nursing (Aged Care)

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Polley, Helen

Question:

What is the government's position on 24/7 registered nurses or minimum nurse-patient care hours?

Answer:

The *Aged Care Act 1997*, and associated subordinate legislation, requires approved providers of residential aged care facilities to meet quality standards and ensure there are adequate numbers of appropriately skilled and qualified staff to meet each care recipient's needs. Commonwealth law does not include mandatory staff-to-care recipient ratios or nursing hours; it does set out instances where a nurse is required, for example in assessment and care planning and in the delivery of complex nursing procedures.

It is the responsibility of individual homes to determine the type and number of staff they require to ensure care recipients receive high quality care. The number of staff-to-care recipients varies across aged care homes based on care recipient mix and needs (which fluctuate), the facility size and design, and how work is organised including the extent to which services are outsourced.

In addition, approved providers must have systems in place to identify and ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, regulatory requirements, professional standards and guidelines, including those set by state governments in relation to qualifications of nursing personnel.