

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000814

OUTCOME: 6 - Ageing and Aged Care

Topic: 24/7 Nursing in NSW (Aged Care)

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Polley, Helen

Question:

The NSW Government recently voted against restoring state-based legislation to require at least 1 registered nurse on duty at all times in high-care nursing homes, but would refer the matter to COAG. What discussions has the department had with the NSW government about this matter? Is the department aware of a referral from the NSW government on this matter? Has the department provided any advice to government on this matter?

Answer:

The New South Wales Government tabled a paper at the Council of Australian Government (COAG) Health Council on improving the quality and safety of residential aged care. The paper included a recommendation that Health Ministers agree to request the Commonwealth uses the opportunity provided by the current review of the aged care standards to ensure there are appropriate levels of nursing care in residential aged care facilities.

In December 2016, the Department of Health and representatives of the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency and the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, met with officials from the New South Wales Ministry of Health. The meeting was held in the context of the COAG Health Council paper, to discuss the Commonwealth's quality regulatory framework for residential aged care and future quality reforms.

The Department recently completed consultations on the Single Aged Care Quality Framework, including a new draft set of standards. Around 350 submissions were received. As part of this process, the New South Wales Government provided feedback, including that the standards should require the clinical care provided in residential aged care be best practice and provided by a qualified clinician.

The Department has provided information, but not formal advice, to Ministers on this matter.