

Friday, 30th July 2004

The Secretary,
Senate Community Affairs References Committee,
Suite S1 59,
Parliament House,
Canberra
ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Registered Nurse Division 2 who has worked in aged care for over 20 years. It is an area of the health sector that I have chosen to work in as one that is rewarding and challenging. However, in recent years I have been reconsidering my position as the standard of care deteriorates and the preoccupation with activities unrelated to direct care increases.

I would like to make the following points:

- A sizeable component of Commonwealth Government funding is not going towards the care of the elderly in residential care but, rather, is going into infrastructure which may increase the assets of proprietors and share-holders but in many cases does not directly benefit residents who increasingly have greater dependency rates and health care needs.

Considering the extent of the Commonwealth Government budget allocation to aged care facilities it would seem appropriate that there should be some accountability of providers in how the money is spent.

- Documentation requirements in relation to the Resident Classification Scale are excessive. They are responsible for many nurses leaving the residential aged care sector; the instrument has a low level of validity; and the associated costs to the industry are immense. They are also an excessive intrusion into the most intimate aspects of residents' lives.

Measures should be developed that utilise information already provided by progress notes and nursing care plans.

- Increasing numbers of untrained and unregulated staff in aged care is resulting in low levels of professional accountability in residential care at a time when residents have increasingly complex health needs.

There needs to be a regulatory framework ensuring minimum levels of Registered Nurses on every shift, and regulated training and registration of unlicensed aged care workers.

Yours faithfully,

Sally Moseby