

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

29 September 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000701

How many aged care facilities issued with sanctions were visited by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission?

Spoken

Hansard Page number: 15

Senator: Katy Gallagher

Question:

CHAIR: We're in a pandemic where 670 Australians have died. You're the regulator, so my question is simply: how many of those where you have issued sanctions has someone on your staff visited in person?

Ms Anderson: And I will provide that information to you on notice.

Answer:

As at 4 October 2020, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Commission) had issued 22 Notices to Agree to Certain Matters (NTAs) in relation to a service's response to a COVID-19 outbreak. One (1) of these related to two (2) co-located services. As such the total number of services that had been issued an NTA at this time is 23.

All services issued with a NTA will have at least one onsite assessment visit by Commission staff before consideration is given to closing the regulatory action. As at 4 October 2020, 11 of the 23 services had been visited by the Commission since the NTA was issued.

The Commission monitors services with a NTA while they work to return to compliance. The delegate determines the length of time for the NTA requirements to be met, based on the non-compliance issues. The provider will avoid the imposition of a revocation sanction if it agrees in writing to the requirements of the NTA within the set time frame.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has continued to adjust its regulatory response to focus on areas of greatest risk to the quality and safety of consumers. The Commission has closely monitored services as it has delivered a targeted COVID-19 regulatory program. This has included:

- Short-notice site visits (typically 24-48 hours) which were temporarily introduced to manage risk processes around COVID-19 when entering a service.
- Unannounced site visits, which resumed on 1 June 2020.
- Infection control monitoring program spot checks, with 838 undertaken from 1 March to 4 October 2020.
- Issuing guidance, instructions, resources and online videos to support the sector in their COVID planning and preparedness.
- Delivering targeted webinars and communications to the sector to assist preparations and share learnings.
- Self-assessment surveys on infection control and outbreak preparations.
- Phone based assessment contacts on infection control processes and key risks affecting the sector in relation to the pandemic.