

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Department of Health**

**Senate Select Committee on COVID-19**

**Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

**29 September 2020**

**PDR Number: IQ20-000682**

**Staff transmission of COVID-19 within aged care facility**

**Spoken**

**Hansard Page number: 10**

**Senator:** Rachel Siewert

**Question:**

Senator SIEWERT: Of the 2,026 staff members who have had COVID infection, how many of those infections were acquired in the facility?

Dr Murphy: We'd have to take that on notice and get back to you. That information would have to come back from Victoria.

Mr Lye: That's correct.

Dr Murphy: They would have the detailed public health database, because they control all that linkage. We certainly know that a number of them haven't occurred in the facility, but we can get that on notice.

Mr Lye: I think almost all outbreaks are the result of a staff member acquiring COVID in the community and bringing it to the facility, bar maybe two or three cases.

Senator SIEWERT: That's the outbreak. I'm talking about how many of the 2,000 staff acquired it.

Dr Murphy: Certainly some have acquired it, with transmission from staff member to staff member or from resident to staff member. We know that some have occurred, but we would have to take on notice the breakdown, because we'd have to get that from Victoria.

**Answer:**

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has identified a staff member as the index case (first diagnosed case) in approximately 84 per cent (146) of the 174 COVID-19 outbreaks in Victorian residential aged care facilities. In some of these cases, the source of staff member's COVID-19 infection remains unknown, but in others they have acquired it from a known source in the community, household contact or another workplace. After the initial COVID-19 case is identified, the residential aged care facility will test all residents and staff associated with the facility. This testing may result in additional positive staff and resident cases.