

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

7 August 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000435

Infection control and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) training provided in residential aged care facilities

Written

Senator: Stirling Griff

Question:

What infection control and/or PPE training, if any, is being provided to workers in residential aged care facilities in South Australia? If training is being offered, is it compulsory for all staff and if not, why not?

Answer:

The Commonwealth regulatory arrangements require approved providers of aged care homes to meet the Aged Care Quality Standards (Quality Standards) to ensure quality care and services are provided to all care recipients.

Under the Quality Standards, providers are required to demonstrate the workforce is recruited, trained, equipped and supported to deliver the outcomes required by the Quality Standards, including on infection control. Through this requirement, it is expected that members of the workforce receive the ongoing support, training, professional development, supervision and feedback they need to carry out their role and responsibilities.

On 16 March 2020, the Australian Government released a foundation infection, prevention and control e-learning module tailored for health and community workers, including aged care workers.

In addition, nine aged care training modules have been released to assist aged care providers and workers in all states and territories, including South Australia, to prepare for the COVID-19 pandemic. Modules include correct use of personal protective equipment. The training is recommended, and has been regularly promoted to providers through our communication and engagement with them.

Providers may have used other training material for their workers, including onsite delivery by infection prevention and control (IPC) specialists. Providers may choose to make this additional training compulsory for staff.

On 21 August 2020, National Cabinet committed to a number of actions to boost aged care preparedness to respond to outbreaks of COVID-19 in residential aged care facilities, including providing additional face-to-face IPC training.

As at 22 February 2021, South Australia (SA) conducted face-to-face IPC and personal protection equipment donning and doffing train-the-trainer sessions (offered to all SA residential aged care facilities (RACFs)) in September 2020 (**128** RACFs attended).

- A recording of the session has been placed on the SA Health website for RACF to utilise on an ongoing basis.

Additionally, in SA, all employees or contractors who provide personal care or nursing care to residents must complete a comprehensive online training model '*Understanding COVID-19 for Aged Care Workers*' (**30,237** completions to date) prior to entering or remaining on the premises of a RACF.

- SA Health has also developed a shorter refresher module, which must be retaken every two months (23,221 completions to date).

SA Health is in the planning stages of a training module to support broader IPC training during 2021.

On 31 August 2020, a series of additional COVID-19 related funding measures were announced, including \$245 million to support residential aged care providers. The payment will be used by providers to fund and support enhanced infection control capability, including through appointing an IPC lead in each RACF.

The IPC lead is required to be trained in IPC. The nominated IPC lead must have completed a specialist IPC training course if they do not have suitable existing qualifications. The IPC lead must also have completed the Department's COVID-19 infection control online training modules, originally released in March and April 2020.