

10/2/2018
Helen Hardy

Dear senators,

I would like to add my submission to senator Rebekha Sharkie's staffing disclosure bill. Australia now has over 276,000 mandatory skilled staffing votes, ensuring the community would like to this enacted, below are my personal reasons for skilled staff ratios.

Increasing mandatory skilled staff ratios means much more than feet on the floor and extra duties completed. The important word is skilled as an experienced nursing sister and a daughter of a mother once in care. Increased skilled staff is necessary, each RN should have time to greet and cast an eye on each resident, each day, to gauge the residents condition, decline, cognitive stage, physical and mental progress, including pain management and general well being. This cannot be done from the office by 'box ticking' or passed on by personal care assistance's. These issues identified early can greatly necessitate an unnecessary hospital stay. Trained staff (RN) should be able to circulate at meal times, assessing the appetite of a resident, well being and health and social engagement, at the same time giving necessary medications PCA's are rushed off their feet and RN's are required to access on going care of wounds, to necessitate if these residents require consultation with visiting GP or hospital care. Extra staff ratios is not all about extra duties being carried out, it is about care being carried out appropriately, most PCA's have 6 weeks medication training, which is dangerous and criminal. Dispensing appropriate medication, takes many years of training and experience and we have already seen resident deaths from inappropriate medications given. Increased staff ratios allow a staff member circulate, particularly in the lounge room, living areas, outside venues and walking areas, to prevent dangerous situation, ie, falls and general accidents. Many frustrated residents and relatives are unable to find staff to toilet residents and instead tell them to soil in an incontinent pad, this is demeaning, embarrassing and degrading, extra staff would allow patients the dignity and the respect of using the toilet. Inadequate staff ratios in the dinning room, doesn't allow residents to be fed appropriately, allowing residents to have cold and insufficient nutrition and hydration. Unfortunately RN's are so rushed with an impossible work load, consultation with skilled staff about your loved one is impossible and many issues and clinical conditions are misdiagnosed Senior staff have an impossible work conditions, not only do they have to be knowledgeable, professional as ethical medical staff, they must escort Drs on rounds, sort out administration and paperwork, which is a job in itself. They must also sort all conflicts between staff, administration, residents and families, an impossible safe work situation for one RN, they are also required to help floor staff with difficult resident and emergencies The increase of staff ratios is imperative, our nursing homes are dangerous, disgraceful and staff are treated with no respect and dignity, if we want to continue to have recognized first class Care facilities, we need to improve staff ratios.

Helen Hardy.