

I have serious questions about the quality of the water at Spring Street. Despite the Federal Court ruling that only registered nurses administer medication, the Victorian Govt has chosen to legislate to allow non trained carers to dispense same in so called "low care " aged care facilities. Further more Health Minister Gavin Jennings states that he guaranteed the new legislation "would not compromise the level of care in Aged Care hostels".

Mr Jennings, may I suggest ,with respect, that you have never in your working life had to make a decision as to whether a frail elderly person's pain level requires a "when necessary" dose of morphine, or to withhold the evening insulin injection because a resident's blood sugar level was already dangerously low!!

I write as a (Div 1) trained nursing sister who has been administering medication for 35 years, knowing that such decisions as these are made on the run, in the context of attempting to provide care with a skeleton staff and with constant interruption from up to 60 residents with a large variety of serious conditions including cancer, strokes and dementia. I know that most trained nurses are accompanied by a healthy regard and an ever present fear of fatal medication error as they push their loaded trolleys around their frantically busy work places.

Just last week Coroner Phil Byrne described as "not optimal" aspects of management of resident care at the Bendigo Nursing Home where Mrs Mary Wilkinson died of injuries , he believed were directly related to her being pushed over by a fellow resident. Along with the potential for physical attack from sadly confused residents I would rate the potential for medication error as the most significant danger to the lives of institutionalised aged people and believe that this Government's decision to be totally irresponsible, Mr Jennings' confident assertion, arrogant and ill informed. Yet again , the frail aged population is treated with contempt.

Glenda Addicott