

The Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs References Committee  
Suite S1 59  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
13/7/04

**Re: Inquiry into Aged Care**

I write as I have a great passion for aged care and been directly involved for 20 years working as a registered nurse and now I am involved when I undertake student placement as a clinical teacher.

I have been a member of many aged care committees and am still involved with Geriaction and the Aged Care Special Interest Group in Victoria.

The following are areas that I express concern and ask they be addressed in this inquiry.

1. The funding for aged care residents is not adequate to cover the care required for the complex needs they present with. High level nursing skills are required to adequately care for these aged people who have complex care needs.
2. Documentation for those palliative care residents admitted needs to be reviewed. The documentation is long and intense for all residents but often palliative care resident do not live for more than 2 months which means staff then have to recommence documentation for a new resident. This extra workload is difficult and takes staff from the care requirements.
3. The streamlining of documentation is necessary. Many surveys, reports and research has been undertaken with little change to the documentation process to date.
4. Undermining the role of the registered nurse is a major concern. The care need of residents' are complex and involved, which untrained personnel do not have the knowledge and skills to undertake complex assessment and analysis.
5. Certificate III in Aged Care Work should be the minimum requirement to work in an aged care facility and HACCC. This qualification needs to be consistent across the country and there must be a consistent curriculum. Maybe there should be registration of these personnel to ensure there is accountability in their responsibilities and role. Many unregulated workers currently work well beyond their qualifications and scope of practice – it is a case of them “not knowing what they don't know”
6. I do not think it is appropriate for young people to be placed in residential aged care facilities. These people have different physical and social needs. Being with aged people does not help their mental stimulation and the range of activities offered, are not always appropriate and meeting needs.
7. Funding for specific areas is essential as it may assist with the decrease in documentation but assuring funds will be available to employ relevant number of staff to manage the specialist field.

I trust this will assist with discussion and debate

Yours sincerely

Christine Crofton