



15 April 2021

Ms Shaza Barbar
Principal Council Officer | Upper House Committees
Parliament of New South Wales

Dear Ms Barbar

Select Committee on the Provisions of the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020 - Post-hearing responses

We refer your email of 1 April 2021, in which you requested responses to questions taken on notice during the second hearing of the Select Committee on the Provisions of the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020, as well as any transcript corrections and additional information we wish to provide.

We **enclose** a copy of the transcript amended in mark-up on pages 2 and 3. These amendments relate to the date of the COVID-19 outbreak at Newmarch House, which was stated to be March 2020 when in fact the outbreak commenced in April 2020. Mr Millard was guided by the incorrect month initially stated by The Chair and referred to this in error.

We provide our answers below to the questions taken on notice throughout the hearing. We have provided a pinpoint reference to the transcript for each question in footnotes.

1. When was the first round of COVID-19 testing completed?¹

- 1.1 All residents who were suitable for swab testing were tested by 14 April 2020 (being the first working day after the Easter holidays and within 72 hours of the first positive case notified). All staff who were present and available on site at the time of testing were also swabbed by this day.
- 1.2 At this time, testing was undertaken by nurses brought in to take swabs from the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, which was coordinated by Dr James Branley. As such, we are unable to access these records.
- 1.3 During the initial stages of the outbreak, Anglicare staff were otherwise directed by NSW Health to present themselves to local testing clinics for swab testing.

¹ Report on Proceedings, page 3 paragraph 1

2. How many requests for PPE were made to NSW Health?²

2.1 The following chronology provides a breakdown of our requests to NSW Health, as well as the Commonwealth Department of Health, regarding PPE procurement:

- (a) On 12 April 2020 (within 24 hours of the outbreak), our Procurement Manager, Shehan Michael (**Shehan**), sent an email to Ms Wheeler from the Commonwealth Department of Health (**DoH**) requesting urgent PPE stock.
- (b) Having received no response or acknowledgement to his email, Shehan then sent a text message to Ms Wheeler seeking a response his email.
- (c) Later that day, Sue from the DoH called Shehan and advised that the DoH could only supply masks and requested that he speak with the State infectious diseases public health unit.
- (d) Shehan called the Penrith Public Health Unit and spoke with the director, who told Shehan that PPE was the responsibility of the DoH.
- (e) On 13 April 2020, Shehan contacted the NSW Ministry of Health (**MoH**) and spoke with Rosemary Hancock. He again requested PPE and was able to secure 4,000 masks to be delivered to Newmarch House. No other PPE was provided.
- (f) On 21 April 2020, Shehan exchanged emails with Ms Katie Barker (Senior Policy and Project Officer from the NSW MoH) to discuss the status of the outbreak and Newmarch House's ongoing PPE needs.
- (g) On 24 April 2020, Shehan exchanged emails with Ms Barker, at NSW MoH, discussing Newmarch House's ongoing PPE requirements, including isolation gowns and N95 masks.
- (h) On 25 April 2020 and 26 April 2020, Gavin Pretorius (Chief Operating Officer – Residential of Anglicare) and Shehan Michael exchanged emails with Lisa Peterson from the DoH and Katie Barker from NSW MoH, regarding the short supply of gowns and the urgent requirement for further stock at Newmarch House.

3. When was the crisis team established at Newmarch House?³

3.1 Anglicare's own surge team began their deployment to Newmarch House on 12 April 2020, when initially 2 RNs were sent to assist. Larger numbers of Anglicare surge staff were deployed on 13 April 2020. There was no crisis team of nurses or Care Staff supplied by NSW State Health.

4. When did the key NSW Health representatives begin attending Newmarch House?⁴

4.1 Dr James Branley, Head of Department of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases at Nepean Hospital, began attending on site at Newmarch House from 12 April 2020.

5. Were there other NSW Health staff on site from the outset?⁵

5.1 Robert Robinson, Clinical Nurse Consultant in Infection Prevention and Control from Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, attended Newmarch House in the first week of the outbreak. However, the extent of his involvement or contribution is unclear and this information will need to be sourced from NSW Health.

² Report on Proceedings Pg 4 Para 3

³ Report on Proceedings, page 4 paragraph 3

⁴ Report on Proceedings, page 4 paragraph 3

⁵ Report on Proceedings page 4 paragraph 5

6. What training did RNs and Personal Care Workers receive before they started working at Newmarch House?⁶

6.1 All new staff who attended Newmarch House during the COVID-19 outbreak were required to attend an induction training workshop on arrival prior to entering the residential aged care facility. This induction workshop was designed to familiarise new-starters with the COVID-19 outbreak at Newmarch House and to outline Anglicare-specific protocols, rather than to provide whole-topic training. In saying this, a significant portion of the induction workshop was dedicated to infection control procedures, particularly donning and doffing PPE.

6.2 The key topics covered during the training workshop comprised of:

- (a) infection control, including training on the chain of infection, handwashing, social distancing and isolation for both staff and residents, use of PPE, handling waste (including contaminated waste), management of spills and colour coded cleaning equipment;
- (b) reporting hazards, staff incidents, accidents and near misses;
- (c) Anglicare's Rhythm of Life program & Aged Care Quality Standards, detailing Anglicare's approach to choice, respect, dignity and independence;
- (d) management and reporting of resident falls, as well as subsequent care;
- (e) recognising deterioration in a resident;
- (f) use of iCare to document progress notes; and
- (g) assisting residents and families to provide feedback.

6.3 In addition to this, the RNs and Care Staff were also provided with additional training as required throughout the outbreak. This included, but was not limited to, iCare training, incident management training, medication management training, and diabetes management training. This training was delivered onsite by the Anglicare Care Manager or Clinical Nurse Educator.

6.4 From 24 April 2020 to 10 May 2020, Anglicare appointed BaptistCare at the direction of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC) to become responsible for managing the outbreak at Newmarch House. During this two-week period, BaptistCare suspended the Anglicare induction workshop and instead provided a very short briefing (understood to have been less than 15 minutes) to staff regarding their roles. I am not aware of what training new staff received during this period under BaptistCare management.

7. How many RNs do we employ total?⁷

7.1 We employ 280 RNs in Residential Care.

8. How many Personal Care workers do we employ total?⁸

8.1 We employ 1,370 Care Workers in Residential Care.

9. How many hours of training and composition of said training before new employee starts?⁹

⁶ Report on Proceedings, page 5 paragraph 12

⁷ Report on Proceedings, page 6 paragraph 12.

⁸ Report on Proceedings, page 6 paragraph 20.

⁹ Report on Proceedings, page 7 paragraph 4.

Care Staff

- 9.1 In addition to whatever training Care Staff may have received prior to their employment by Anglicare, the total number of training hours completed by new Care Staff amounts to 95 hours. This is comprised of 68.5 hours of workshops and induction training, plus 26.5 hours of supervised shifts (made up of two full days and four half days). These supervised 'buddy' shifts are completed alongside an experienced Care Staff member.
- 9.2 The induction training/workshops include the following:
- (a) two consecutive days of workshops at the start of employment, including training on the Charter of Aged Care Rights, standards of care, recognising signs of deterioration in a resident, awareness of dementia/mental illness/palliative care, infection control, and responding to an emergency, amongst other things;
 - (b) half day workshop with care staff, providing training on hazardous manual tasks for direct resident contact, and use of technology; and
 - (c) one day workshop at the end of first month of employment, including a debriefing session, training on the Rhythm of Life program, Aged Care Quality Standards, behaviour management and communicating with residents living with dementia;
 - (d) two full day workshops on monitoring and chart observations, supporting the residents (providing personal care and managing suspected assault), assisting residents with meals, handling linen and waste, and palliative care training;
 - (e) a full day workshop on food safety for non-servery staff and awareness and support around dysphagia; and
 - (f) a full day workshop on medication administration.
- 9.3 This program of learning is completed by Care Staff over a period of three months. This allows staff to adequately absorb the learning, put it into practice, complete competency assessments, and participate in reflective practice workshops to confirm capability.

RNs

- 9.4 The total number of training hours completed by new RNs amounts to 71 hours. This is comprised of 34.75 hours of workshops and induction training, plus 36.25 hours of supervised shifts (made up of four full days). These supervised 'buddy' shifts are completed alongside an experienced Registered Nurse.
- 9.5 The induction training/workshops include the following:
- (a) two consecutive days of workshops at the start of employment, including training on the Charter of Aged Care Rights, standards of care, recognising signs of deterioration in a resident, awareness of dementia/mental illness/palliative care, infection control, and responding to an emergency, amongst other things;
 - (b) half day workshop with care staff, providing training on hazardous manual tasks for direct resident contact, and use of technology; and
 - (c) one day workshop at the end of the first month of employment, including a debriefing session, training on the Rhythm of Life program, Aged Care Quality Standards, behaviour management and communicating with residents living with dementia.
- 9.6 In addition, from May 2021, we intend to include an additional RN specific workshop training day for all RNs within the first two weeks of employment. This will increase the workshop hours to 42.75, meaning total training hours will increase to 79.

- 9.7 This training is completed by RNs over a two to three-week period depending on skills, experience, and capabilities they bring from previous roles.
- 10. How many labour agency staff are on staff as a proportion of Anglicare's total staffing needs?¹⁰**
- 10.1 Across all of our homes, 1.6% of our RNs and Care Staff are agency staff.
- 11. How much does Anglicare expect to save through the reduction of hours in its facilities?¹¹**
- 11.1 The targeted savings are expected to be between \$7 million and \$7.5 million annually.
- 12. What date did Kathy Dempsey attend Newmarch House?¹²**
- 12.1 Ms Dempsey first attended Newmarch House on 1 May 2020, when she oversaw a team of infection control practitioners sent by the Public Health Unit to observe infection control and undertake an audit of the home.
- 12.2 Ms Dempsey also attended Newmarch House on 4, 11 and 19 May 2020.
- 13. On what dates were requests for assistance made to NSW Health?¹³**
- 13.1 The Federal Government had declared responsibility for providing staff assistance in the event of an outbreak, so all requests for staffing assistance were directed to Tania Browne at the Commonwealth Department of Health. The first request was made on Tuesday 14 April 2020 (within 72 hours of the beginning of the Newmarch House outbreak).
- 13.2 NSW Health were aware of the staffing shortages from their participation in the multi-agency meetings with Anglicare, the Public Health Unit, the Department of Health, Dr Branley, ACQSC and the Ministry of Health, which occurred on a daily basis throughout the Newmarch House outbreak.
- 14. What is the average salary or earnings of personal care worker at an Anglicare facility who has a certificate or a degree qualification?¹⁴**
- 14.1 The average salary of a Certificate III Care Worker is \$25.05 per hour.
- 15. What is the average salary of RNs at an Anglicare facility?¹⁵**
- 15.1 The average salary of a RN is in accordance with Level 1 Pay point 3 of the Nurses Award, being \$39.38 per hour.
- 16. How many hours in general does a personal care worker work per week when you factor in overtime and other charges?¹⁶**
- 16.1 38 hours per week.
- 17. Of the redundancies currently being made, how many worked at NMH?¹⁷**
- 17.1 Of the redundancies currently being made, 2 RNs work at Newmarch House.

¹⁰ Report on Proceedings, page 7 paragraph 10

¹¹ Report on Proceedings, page 7 paragraph 24

¹² Report on Proceedings, page 12 paragraph 11

¹³ Report on Proceedings, page 12 paragraph 17

¹⁴ Report on Proceedings, page 13 paragraph 28

¹⁵ Report on Proceedings, page 14 paragraph 7

¹⁶ Report on Proceedings, page 14 paragraph 7

¹⁷ Report on Proceedings, page 15 paragraph 1

Please contact Ms Spencer or Ms Lark should you have any queries in relation to the above.

Kind regards

Grant Millard

Chief executive Officer