INQUIRY INTO REGISTERED NURSES IN NEW SOUTH WALES NURSING HOMES

Name: Ms Leonie Gambrill
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As a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Palliative Care I can speak with some authority to express my concerns at the proposed legislation to remove the mandatory laws to have Registered Nurses on duty 24/7 in residential aged care facilities (RACF). As palliative care is the core business of RACF's it is essential to have a RN on duty to:

1) Recognise the terminal phase of a resident's life
2) Initiate the appropriate care to ensure the resident's dignity & comfort
3) Consult with the GP to negotiate subcutaneous medications such as Morphine & Midazolam to ensure distressing symptoms of pain, nausea, delirium & terminal restlessness are controlled
4) Set up a continuous infusion with the above medications via a syringe driver
5) Be competent to manage the terminal symptoms in the RACF rather than calling an ambulance to take the resident to hospital in the dying phase which causes distress to the resident & their family as well as placing a greater strain on ED departments & hospitals
6) Enabling the resident to die in their place of care in familiar surroundings with staff who know & love them
7) Provide support to the resident's family
8) Oversee the resident's care provided by less qualified staff such as AIN's & carers with limited education & skills

These points are just some of the reasons that our frail & aged population with high care needs at the end of their life, deserve the most qualified nursing staff & care that is available. In the coming years with the demographic ageing of the population the need for RN's 24/7 in RACF's will become even greater.