

Submission  
No 89

**INQUIRY INTO REGISTERED NURSES IN NEW SOUTH  
WALES NURSING HOMES**

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date received:** 22/07/2015

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Partially Confidential

## Registered Nurses in New South Wales Nursing Homes Inquiry.

I refer to the terms of reference of the Inquiry.

(1) (a) (i) There will be a direct impact on the safety of people in care if the 24/7 requirement for Registered Nurses (RN's) is removed. This impact would be most keenly evidenced by the lack of suitably medically trained RN's to both deliver and oversee care and the resultant absence of knowledge and expertise available to people in care. Such lack of knowledge, expertise and professionalism impacts on both general care and medical care due to the high level of care required. Furthermore there is increased lack of accountability since unregistered staff have no registration authority to which they are accountable.

(ii) There will be a direct shift onto the Public Health System specifically on the Emergency Departments. Unqualified staff will be unable to assess and treat even basic ailments and will err on the side of caution (or policy) and send a person with even a minor ailment to the Emergency Department.

(b) In terms of comparing RN 24/7 cover in Nursing Homes and Hospitals one needs to bear in mind that typically there is only one RN on duty each shift for many more residents than in a hospital ward, over what can be large multistory buildings or massive areas. This cannot be compared to a hospital ward. Furthermore typically there is onsite access to Medical Practitioners in a Hospital to whom the RN has direct access.

(c) Schedule 8 Medication Keys need to be kept on the person of a RN at all times and as per the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 (NSW) stored in a double locked cupboard and a register kept. Such medication requires Professional handling so that it is safely handled and those administering it are accountable to a Professional body.

(d) RN's are able to fully assess and examine a person following a critical incident and to determine whether that person requires immediate hospitalization . Unqualified staff are not. The staff will, as noted above, err on the side of caution or policy and call an ambulance (another cost) and send the person to the nearest Emergency Department.

2. At present there is no regulation of Assistants in Nursing. With the rapidly aging population and very high needs of those in Aged Care consideration needs to be given to both upgrading the standards of education for the Certificate 3 and Certificate 4 in Aged Care and to devising some regulation of the Assistants in Nursing. The minimum standards are too low.

3. There are no nurse patient ratios in Nursing Homes. Operators self regulate (which really means no regulation at all). There can for instance be one RN for anything from 20 - 100 people. The number of Assistants in Nursing vary depending on the time of day but for many hours of the evening and night there is minimal staffing for instance one Assistant in Nursing per 20 or more people.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission and I strongly urge you to retain the requirement for 24/7 RN cover in Nursing Homes.