

**Submission
No 121**

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

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It is not a bed problem; it is a service delivery opportunity by RN's

Précis: Aged care beds out-number hospital beds by greater than two to one (> 2:1). When aged care residents are admitted to a hospital the reason is often the need for a small increment of clinical care beyond the scope of the residential facilities routine support of Activities of Daily Living (ADL's). This keeps the resident from returning to their vacant aged care bed. The subsequent impact on the occupancy of hospital bed days is significant.

Background:- The benefit of aligning resources to the care needs of older Australians can be potentially measured by comparing the impact of ensuring consistent accessible care across acute and aged care by the strategic placement of Registered Nurses in aged care.

E.G. On a hospital evening shift a registered nurse (RN) to patient ratio is 1 nurse to 4 or five patients. As the RN's work in teams at any one time there is often collective knowledge of nurses (other teams) that can be drawn upon as to managing the care needs of a deteriorating patient. In residential aged care a registered nurse to resident ratio can be 1 nurse to 75 to 100 residents. More often than not there is not a 'colleague' RN down the corridor to ask that question...what do you think? The economic benefit of ensuring the aged care nurse is guided by consistent process in the provision of care will have a direct and positive influence on reducing the admission rate to emergency departments after hours.

On most occasions when an aged care resident is admitted to a scarce hospital bed their own residential bed remains empty. The question that can be asked for this patient group is; ... 'does health have a bed shortage or is it a matter of how beds are used between hospitals and aged care facilities?'

The emerging paradigm of care is when transition points between services are seamless and the workforce has the vocational experience of applying consistent process guiding practice across acute and aged care settings. Providing that small increment of registered nurse care at point of need such as in the aged care facility rather than at point of delivery at the hospital. The technology and trained staff are available here and now to address these increments of care at "Point of Need" by Registered Nurses in aged care,

Summary:- The integration of care between service providers is an essential element in developing the necessary solutions to manage the health and wellbeing of an aging community. This can be achieved when key partners reorientate in unison the physical and social infrastructure of their services to collectively demonstrate a health gain. This strategy of reorientating physical and social capital need only to be minor by each stakeholder but when applied collectively has a significant local impact. The result will free up much needed local hospital beds whilst enhancing the care received by an aging population outside of a hospital setting. A challenge for health and aged care leaders is how they demonstrate to the community a style of leadership that brings about a whole of community response to promoting the health and wellbeing of an aging population.