

Doctors applaud boost in nursing for aged and frail

Elderly Queenslanders in public aged care homes will get better clinical care, with the Palaszczuk Government to mandate the minimum time nurses must spend with each resident.

Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia said the move to ensure elderly residents received at least 3.65 hours of nursing per day demonstrated the State Government was listening to doctors and other front line health workers.

Dr Dhupelia said AMA Queensland had raised concerns about aged care staffing in its submission to the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee (HCDSDFVPC) current inquiry into aged care, end-of-life and palliative care and voluntary assisted dying.

["In its submission, AMA Queensland called for minimum nursing ratios to be introduced and for an on-site registered nurse to be available at all aged care homes, 24-hours a day,"](#) Dr Dhupelia said.

"We had serious concerns that the reduction in trained nurses from 21 per cent of staff in 2003 to 15 per cent today corresponded with a rise in personal care workers who work hard but who have insufficient training to care for elderly patients with complex conditions.

"We are pleased that the State Government is taking swift action on this issue."

Under the new state laws, to be introduced next month, all nursing homes in Queensland would be forced to publicly report their staff ratios.

Dr Dhupelia said revelations at the Royal Commission into Aged Care highlighted the plight of many aged care residents.

"We hope private aged care providers follow the State Government's lead with mandating nursing hours," he said.

"No doubt there will be a varying need for trained nurse ratios in different aged care facilities based on the differing acuity and care needs of the residents in each facility, but whatever process that is used to calculate nursing need must be transparent and accountable.

"These new laws apply to 16 State Government-owned facilities but there are also 400 privately-run aged care homes across Queensland.

"GPs are having a lot of trouble accessing the trained nursing staff in aged care homes to ensure their patients receive appropriate care and prescribed treatments.

"More registered nurses are vital at all stages of care including clinical handover, managing emergency situations, prescription monitoring and palliative care."

Media contacts: Fran Metcalf, Sequel PR - 0417 627 867; Chiara Lesevre, AMA Queensland, 0419 735 641