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AMA SUPPORTS GREATER QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN AGED CARE

The AMA welcomes and supports the calls for greater quality and accountability in the Australian aged care system, as recommended by Kate Carnell AO and Professor Ron Paterson ONZM in their report, *Review of National Aged Care Quality Regulatory Processes*, which was released yesterday.

AMA Vice President, Dr Tony Bartone, said that the report reflects many elements of the AMA submission, most notably the appointment of a new dedicated Aged Care Commissioner who would oversee the work of an Aged Care Quality Commissioner, and Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, and an Aged Care Consumer Commissioner.

Dr Bartone said the report recommends much-needed improved communications for patient information sharing between State, Territory, and Federal Governments through the new Commission.

“The AMA supports new processes to ensure residents are informed and educated on their rights as a consumer, and their right to complain about a service,” Dr Bartone said.

“The report suggests accreditation standards to implement restrictions around the use of restraints in Residential Aged Care Facilities, which the AMA believes should always be considered a last resort.

“There is an urgent need for clearer standards relating to clinical care in residential aged care facilities (RACFs), and the Report recommends more work from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care to make improvements in this area.

“We also welcome the recommendation to increase the use of Resident Medication Management Reviews to reduce the risk of polypharmacy, which has led to a large number of medication-related hospital admissions for people over 65.

“Aged Care Minister, Ken Wyatt, has also announced that RACFs will no longer be notified when re-accreditation reviews will occur. They will now be completely unannounced.

“The AMA welcomes the Review recommendations, but the real issue now is how quickly the Government will consider and adopt them.

“Australia’s aged care population cannot wait for the other recommendations to be put in place.

“We cannot allow further cases of neglect to occur.”

The AMA would like to see further action beyond the Review recommendations, including:

- Doctors need to be adequately compensated by Medicare to increase access to medical care for people living in RACFs.
- Doctors’ clinical software systems need to integrate with My Aged Care and the RACFs’ software to improve patient information sharing.
- Better access to nurses in aged care facilities.

- Funding to recruit and retain qualified, registered nursing staff and carers who are specifically trained in dealing with issues that older people face.
- Increased awareness of mental health issues to ensure the need for these services is identified through the ACFI assessment process.

The AMA's submission to the Review is at <https://ama.com.au/submission/ama-submission-review-commonwealth-government%E2%80%99s-regulatory-activities-applying-quality>

The Review report is at <https://agedcare.health.gov.au/quality/review-of-national-aged-care-quality-regulatory-processes-report>

26 October 2017

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