



CHIEF CLINICIAN TO ADVISE NEW AGED CARE WATCHDOG

A Chief Clinical Advisor will be appointed to assist the new aged care watchdog from next year, following strong advocacy from the AMA.

The Federal Government amended its *Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018* to formally enshrine the position of Chief Clinical Advisor to assist the new Commissioner. The Bill passed Parliament yesterday.

In addition, the AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said that the Department of Health has confirmed that the Chief Clinical Advisor will be a doctor.

“The Carnell-Paterson Review, which was initiated in response to the shocking failures at the Oakden facility in South Australia, recommended establishing an independent aged care Commission to centralise accreditation,” Dr Bartone said.

“The AMA has continuously called for the establishment of a Commission that provides a clear, well-communicated governance hierarchy, which brings leadership and accountability to the aged care system.

“In our *Position Statement on Resourcing Aged Care*, in our submission to the Inquiry into the Bill, and during our public evidence to the Inquiry, the AMA consistently argued that having a Chief Clinical Advisor is an absolute must for the Commission.

“Further, the AMA argued that the Chief Clinical Advisor must be a registered medical practitioner, ideally either a GP or a geriatrician, with strong expertise in aged care.

“Doctors are the primary coordinators and providers of clinical care to older people, and are best placed to fill the Advisor role.

“The AMA has for some time advocated for more consideration of clinical matters when regulating the aged care sector.

“The AMA looks forward to working with the Commissioner and the Chief Clinical Advisor with a goal to improve older people’s much-needed timely access to quality clinical care.”

The Aged Care Safety and Quality Commission is due to commence operations on 1 January, 2019.

The Commissioner will determine the scope of the Advisor’s work, but the role is likely to cover:

- regulation of, and compliance with, the Aged Care Quality Standards, including provider’s performance in clinical care and governance, and reducing infections and restraint use;
- complaints resolution; and
- education to providers and their staff, consumers, and the public, around clinical issues.

The Chief Clinical Advisor will be supported by an expert clinical panel.

Background

- Australia's population is ageing, with an increase in multiple, complex, chronic conditions.
- Of permanent residents in residential aged care facilities in June 2017, one-third had high care needs in every ACFI domain (ie complex health care, behavior, and activities of daily living).
- 85 per cent had at least one mental or behavioural condition.
- 47 per cent had depression.
- 52 per cent had dementia.
- The most common complaints made against RACFs in 2017-18 were medication administration and management, personal and oral hygiene, and staff numbers/ratio.
- As of June 2018, 121,418 older people were waiting for a home care package.

28 November 2018

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: http://twitter.com/ama_media

Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>

Follow *Australian Medicine* on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/amaausmed>

Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>