



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Registered Nurses to remain in nursing homes – for now

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has received an assurance from the NSW Ministry of Health that registered nurses will remain on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in nursing homes throughout the state.

The NSWNMA raised concerns over a proposed amendment to the *Public Health Act 2010*, which aimed to remove the requirement for a registered nurse to be employed around the clock in care settings classified as nursing homes.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said he was pleased Health Minister Jillian Skinner had acknowledged the NSWNMA's concerns and ordered a temporary stay of the status quo.

"Removal of the legislated requirement to have registered nurses on duty 24 hours per day in aged care homes is not in the best interests of the residents," Mr Holmes said.

"The Ministry of Health knows that unwell or injured aged care residents can often end up in public hospital emergency departments and hospital beds. Having registered nurses in those homes can make a significant difference as to whether a resident must be sent to hospital and when they could return.

"It defies logic that the Ministry of Health would risk the safety of nursing home residents by removing a requirement for a registered nurse from the 24-hour roster within these facilities.

"There are around 885 aged care facilities across NSW, 425 of which meet the definition of a nursing home for this requirement.

"The modern terminology may have changed to 'Aged Care Facility' but these are in fact nursing homes which require the dedicated care and services of professional nursing staff, that's why they were called nursing homes. No one would choose to live in these homes unless they needed the high level of care 24 hours per day."

This week Mrs Skinner confirmed to the NSWNMA that current arrangements for registered nurses in nursing homes with high care residents would remain for a further 18 months, while a broader consultation process occurred.

Mrs Skinner said:

NSW Health is committed to providing all residents of aged care facilities a high level of care that addresses their complex health needs.

As a result of the consultation process in which your organisation took part, the Ministry has decided to establish a transitional regulation that effectively grandfathers facilities



subject to the current NSW Requirements for a period of 18 months. During that time, a joint consultation process will be conducted bringing together all groups with the goal of reaching a consensus position for the way forward.

Mr Holmes said the NSWNMA would continue to lobby on behalf of registered nurses, enrolled nurses and assistants in nursing who work within the aged care sector and was committed to ensuring residents of all aged care facilities receive the high quality care they rightly deserve.

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