



Cancer Council NSW

17 March 2015

The Hon. Jillian Skinner, MP
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

NSWNMA	
File No:	
EDI.....	
Rec'd	23 MAR 2015
Allocated by:.....	to:.....
Copies to:	

Dear Minister Skinner,

Registered nurses in nursing homes

I am writing in support of the requirement that a registered nurse is on duty at all times in nursing homes in NSW. Cancer Council NSW acknowledges the Government's action in establishing an interim arrangement to maintain this requirement until the end of 2015, which indicates your understanding that this is an issue of concern. However people affected by cancer who live in nursing homes need the reassurance that, beyond this date, they will continue to have the care of a registered nurse if they need it.

As you know, each year more than 13,500 people die of cancer in NSW accounting for over 25% of all deaths.¹ A Cancer Institute NSW study in 2007 showed that approximately 9% of cancer patients died in a nursing home.² It is likely that, before their death, these people received some care from a registered nurse. The availability of a registered nurse may also result in a dying patient avoiding a potentially distressing transfer to hospital, which also benefits the health system by avoiding the costs associated with using a hospital bed unnecessarily.

Nursing care during the cancer journey may include administering complex cancer drug regimens or coordinating long-term follow-up. A registered nurse may also be required to assess and monitor an acute illness resulting from cancer, to manage the effects of cancer treatments such as radiotherapy or chemotherapy or to support rehabilitation. Cancer can also result in pain which causes distress for the sufferer and their families. Appropriate care may require a registered nurse to administer pain relief and provide the psychological help necessary to ease distress.

Cancer is the largest cause of disease in Australia and the incidence of cancer rises with age. The population of NSW is ageing and growing at an increasing rate and by 2021 an estimated 51,000 people will be told 'you have cancer'.¹ The good news is that advances in cancer prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment are allowing many more people to survive and live longer with the disease. However, this also means that the burden posed by cancer is likely to increase and the need for registered nurses in nursing homes will continue.

CCNSW seeks your assurance that the existing requirement for a registered nurse on duty at all times in all NSW nursing homes will be transferred permanently into NSW legislation.

Cancer Council NSW
ABN 51 116 463 846

153 Dowling Street
Woolloomooloo NSW 2011
PO Box 572 Kings Cross NSW 1340

T: 02 9334 1900
F: 02 8302 3500
E: feedback@nswcc.org.au

Cancer Council NSW
13 11 20
cancercouncil.com.au

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to your response. Should you have any further questions, please contact Bernadette Roberts, Senior Policy Analyst on 9334 1779 or by email on bernadetter@nswcc.org.au.

Yours sincerely



Jim L'Estrange
Chief Executive Officer

Cc Mr Brett Holmes, General Secretary NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association

References

- (1) Cancer Institute NSW. Cancer incidence and mortality: projections 2011 to 2021. Sydney: Cancer Institute NSW; 2011.
- (2) Tabor B, Tracey E, Glare P, Roder D. Place of death of people with cancer in NSW. Sydney: Cancer Institute NSW; 2007.