

30 May 2017

## **ACN CONCERNED OVER INCIDENCE OF PREMATURE AND POTENTIALLY PREVENTABLE DEATHS OF NURSING HOME RESIDENTS.**

Research published in the Medical Journal of Australia (MJA) titled ‘Premature deaths of nursing home residents: an epidemiological analysis’ identifies a rise in premature and potentially preventable deaths of nursing home residents across Australia over the past 13 years.

“The research findings indicate that more needs to be done to ensure the safety of our nursing home residents,” said Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward FACN, CEO of the Australian College of Nursing (ACN).

The rise in premature and potentially preventable deaths has coincided with a drop in the proportion of registered nurses in the aged care sector from 21% of the direct care workforce in 2003 to just 14.9% in 2012. The proportion of enrolled nurses also dropped from 13.1% to 11.5% whilst unregistered personal care workers increased from 58.5% to 68.2%.<sup>1</sup>

“ACN believes that regulation of nursing homes should at a minimum mandate a requirement that a registered nurse (RN) be on-site and available at all times to promote safety and well-being for residents,” said Adjunct Professor Ward.

It has been shown that more RN direct care time per resident per day was strongly associated with better outcomes,<sup>2</sup> and an improved RN presence can lead to reduced emergency department transfers.<sup>3</sup>

The RN scope of practice enables the high level clinical assessment; clinical decision making; nursing surveillance and intervention; service coordination; and clinical and managerial leadership required to meet desired outcomes and to ensure the provision of high quality care.

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<sup>1</sup> King, D. et al. The Aged Care Workforce 2012 – Final report.

[https://agedcare.health.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1426/f/documents/11\\_2014/rdp004-nacwcas-report.pdf](https://agedcare.health.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1426/f/documents/11_2014/rdp004-nacwcas-report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Horn, S. et al. RN staffing time and outcomes of long-stay nursing home residents: pressure ulcers and other adverse outcomes are less likely as RNs spend more time on direct patient care. The American Journal of Nursing. 105(11):58-70; Quiz 71, NOV 2005

<sup>3</sup> Dwyer, R. et al 1. Unplanned Transfer to Emergency Departments for Frail Elderly Residents of Aged Care Facilities: A Review of Patient and Organizational Factors. Journal of the American Medical Directors Association, Volume 16, Issue 7, 551 - 562

“Care delivered in nursing homes must be led by RNs. Due to the growing prevalence of co-morbidities associated with physical and cognitive decline, polypharmacy, and greater professional accountability, increasingly the nursing home population requires more complex care that can only be provided under the direct supervision of RNs,” expressed Adjunct Professor Ward.

The research paper can be accessed at <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2017/206/10/premature-deaths-nursing-home-residents-epidemiological-analysis>

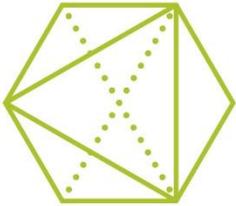
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Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward, CEO of ACN.



# Australian College of Nursing

Advancing nurse leadership

## Notes to Editors:

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is the national professional organisation for all nurse leaders and its aim is to ensure that the Australian community receives quality nursing care now and in the future. ACN is a membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialties. ACN is also the Australian member of the International Council of Nurses headquartered in Geneva.

ACN, an organisation not afraid to intelligently challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia's health care, is a well-connected and educated national body that drives change with people of influence to enhance the delivery of health services to the Australian community. ACN advances the skills and expertise of nurses to provide leadership in their contribution to the policy, practice and delivery of health care.

A membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialties, ACN's membership includes many nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics and researchers.

## What is the role of ACN to media?

- ACN provides trusted, well supported information about Australia's health care system, the delivery of health care, nursing leadership and the nursing profession.

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- ACN has a number of spokespeople within the organisation who can comment on Australia's health care system, the delivery of health care, nursing leadership and the nursing profession.
- ACN offers media with an alternative voice to that of an industrial relations perspective.
- ACN is in-the-know and can comment on health care matters of interest.
- ACN can respond to media requests in a timely manner and with subject/clinical expert's available on-hand for further discussion.
- ACN regularly responds to government updates pertaining to Australia's health care system.

### What role does ACN play?

ACN is here to act and deliver results as agents of change. They are working towards a brighter future through advancing nurse leadership to enhance the delivery of health care to all. The organisation provides nurse leaders with access to relevant information, support and education that will enhance Australia's reputation on the world stage.

### Social media channels:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acnursing>

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/acn\\_tweet](https://twitter.com/acn_tweet)

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-college-of-nursing>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/acn\\_nursing](https://www.instagram.com/acn_nursing)