

MEDIA RELEASE

29 August 2016



States and Territories Warned: Federal aged care cuts will choke hospitals

Pressure on public hospitals in States and Territories will worsen significantly because of more than \$2 billion in Federal Government cuts to aged care health funding, one of Australia's largest not-for-profit aged care providers said today.

Chair of UnitingCare Australia's Aged Care Network, Steve Teulan, said the cuts will mean aged care providers in States and Territories will struggle to meet the health care needs of vulnerable and sick older people.

UnitingCare Australia has written today to State and Territory Governments to warn about the impending impact on public hospitals and to ask for their help in stopping the cuts.

"These cuts will reduce funding by up to \$18,000 for older people with complex health needs and shift the budget burden of caring for vulnerable sick older people from aged care facilities to hospitals," Mr Teulan said.

Under the proposed cuts, the ability to meet critical health needs such as wound and skin care, mobility, arthritis treatment and end of life care will be threatened.

The public hospital systems in the States and Territories are already under pressure, and if residential aged care service providers are forced to reconsider admitting older people ready to be discharged from hospitals, that pressure will only grow.

"Many of our residents within the UnitingCare Aged Care Network are frail older people discharged from hospital.

"We would never seek to turn away a person needing care, but Federal Government cuts will have a negative impact on the health of older people, the public hospital system and the health system as a whole.

UnitingCare is calling on the State and Territory Governments to urge their Federal counterparts to halt the cuts to aged care funding and to work with the sector to develop a more sustainable funding model.

"The cuts are at odds with the Federal Government's claim that it is 'passionate about ensuring Australians don't just live longer lives, but healthier ones too'".

"We are appealing to the Federal Government to work with us to find a more sustainable way of funding aged care so vulnerable sick older people get the health care they need into the future and we can meet the growing needs of our ageing population," Mr Teulan said.

**Minister for Health and Aged Care The Hon Sussan Ley, media release 18 July 2016*

ENDS

Further information/interviews: Gerard Delaney Ph 0413 274 176 or gerard@nat.unitingcare.org.au