

Question on Notice

No. 1253

Asked on 8 November 2022

MS R BATES ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON Y D'ATH)—

QUESTION

With reference to Question on Notice No. 325 of 2022 and the Minister's statement in the House on 21 April 2021 that 'our health system is currently providing beds to almost 600 people who should be in disability or aged-care accommodation'—

Will the Minister provide the following as at 30 October 2022 (a) a list of each Queensland Health facility where these patients are located and (b) the number of patients from this cohort at each facility?

ANSWER

Long-stay patients are inpatients that are medically ready for discharge but are awaiting appropriate supports to transition to the community. Queensland Health conducts a statewide long-stay patient census on a quarterly basis as a point-in-time snapshot. The number of long-stay patients is subject to change daily as long-stay patients transition to the community and other patients become long-stay.

The statement made in the Legislative Assembly on 21 April 2021 that, 'our health system is currently providing beds to almost 600 people who should be in disability or aged-care accommodation', referred to data as at the 24 February 2021 census.

Question on Notice No. 325 of 2022 referred to census data as at 23 February 2022. The most recent census occurred on 31 August 2022 and the next census will occur on 30 November 2022.

I am advised that as patients transfer across different hospital settings the most appropriate data aggregation is by Hospital and Health Service (HHS) rather than at the facility level. See below:

HHS	24 FEB 21	23 FEB 22	31 AUG 22
Cairns and Hinterland	22	18	26
Central Queensland	44	46	31
Central West	0	0	1
Children's Health Queensland	6	4	5
Darling Downs	27	47	66
Gold Coast	58	58	68
Mackay	13	32	34
Mater Public	1	0	11
Metro North	120	104	133
Metro South	60	33	83

HHS	24 FEB 21	23 FEB 22	31 AUG 22
North West	13	6	13
South West	7	4	6
Sunshine Coast	32	39	64
Torres and Cape	1	0	0
Townsville	119	55	45
West Moreton	25	37	36
Wide Bay	27	29	8
Grand Total	575	512	630

Despite continued investment by Queensland Health through the Long-Stay Rapid Response program, the number of long-stay patients has risen to 630 as at 31 August 2022.

The top barriers to discharge continue to be issues that are the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. Most of our older patients are waiting for residential aged care beds and most of our younger patients are waiting for NDIS services to become available.

The aged care sector is seeing providers closing beds due to insufficient staff and inadequate access to GPs both of which are essential requirements to ensure quality care and safe services.

Workforce challenges in both sectors make it particularly difficult to transition our most complex patients many of whom require complex care and or expert behavioral supports that are lacking in the Commonwealth programs.

Thanks to the newly elected Federal Government, the National Disability Insurance Agency has commenced new initiatives to get long-stay patients into the community. While we are yet to see the benefits in our hospital data, it is expected that the number of NDIS participants who are long-stay will soon reduce.

We can see the impact of our Long-Stay Rapid Response investment through the 300 people referred to the program who have now left hospital, and the decreasing amount of time our long-stay patients are spending in hospital. Between February and August 2022, the average length of stay dropped from 332 days to 242 days for younger patients, and from 107 days to 91 days for older patients.

While more older people were counted in the LSOP census in August this year than the previous quarter, this may in part be due to a higher rate of hospitalisation of this population during winter due to higher rates of communicable diseases in our community during the winter season.

Queensland Health remains committed to supporting patients to move into the community once they're medically ready to leave hospital.