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NEW AGED CARE FUNDING A START TO HELPING OUR MOST VULNERABLE

New Federal Government funding announced today will help the chronically-underfunded aged care sector to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, but much more will need to be done to address the long-term issues, AMA President, Dr Omar Khorshid, said today.

Almost 70 per cent of all COVID-19 deaths in Australia relate to people in residential aged care, one of the highest rates in the world.

“The AMA welcomes the additional \$563.3 million to extend support for the aged care sector’s response to COVID-19,” Dr Khorshid said.

“The decades-old issues in aged care have only been amplified by the pandemic, and have resulted in unnecessary deaths of our oldest and most vulnerable Australians.

“The announcement of a national plan to tackle COVID-19 in aged care was welcome. However, plans mean nothing without adequate resources to carry them out.

“The aged care and health systems must be provided with additional supports and funding to get through the pandemic.

“The aged care sector has been chronically underfunded for years, with aged care workforce underpaid and under-appreciated for the great work they do in caring for our elderly.

“Any funding that goes toward supporting, retaining and upskilling the workforce is welcome.

“We also welcome the requirements tied to today’s funding for providers to report on how these funds have been used.

“Funding intended for employing clinical care leads in aged care homes must be spent for that purpose only, with accountability mechanisms in place to ensure it is.

“Clinical care was the most frequently unmet Quality Standard in aged care in the first quarter of 2020.

“Anyone leaving nursing homes due to COVID-19 concerns should have the option of accessing other forms of aged care supports, so the additional \$71.4 million announced by the Government for the Community Home Support Program is welcomed by the AMA.”

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