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Nursing Sociology - Analysis and Critical Evaluation of Primary Health and Community Care Service: the Perspective of Health Professionals on Aged Care -

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Total Number of Words: 391

PHC and Community Care Used to Keep Aged Individuals in their Homes

Longer

Almost three million aged people in Australia are more than 65 years of age. The number of aged people in the country is expected to double over the next 30 years. (Agedcare Australia, 2008a) For this reason, aged individuals who enter aged care homes are required to make contribution for the cost of their care whenever possible.

The government is promoting the need to keep the aged population within the comfort of their own home since Australia has only 2, 900 government funded aged care homes and 200, 000 operational aged care places which includes the aged care homes, the community and flexicare (Agedcare Australia, 2008b).

Home and Community Care (HACC) is a cost-sharing program between the Commonwealth and State/Territory governments to enable the aged individuals to remain in their own homes by financially supporting the old individuals' primary carer. (Department of Health, 2008) As part of strengthening the goals of HACC program, members of HACC Program can

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receive financial support up to \$12, 000 each year whereas HACC carers can also receive \$12, 000 each year for their service (Aged Care Policy Directorate, 2006). Aside from HACC, Community Aged Care Packages (CACP) also Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) also strengthens support for aged population within their own home. CACP provides the aged people with support service which focuses on the complex caring needs of aged individuals whereas EACH aims to delivery health care services at home (Australian Government, 2008).

Australia has inadequate number of registered nurses (Kearney & Thomas, 2008, p. 5) Because of the limited government funding, as much as 2. 6 million people in Australia receive healthcare services from informal carers instead of receiving care from primary carers (Austin et al., 2005; Gilmore, 2004) as compared to the actual health care demands of the aged population. Allen Consulting Group (2007) reported that there are only 57 primary carers that handle the health care needs of 100 aged individuals today.

Since informal carers do not have sufficient knowledge on ways to protect themselves from strains, this group of people are more prone to suffer from physical injury. To increase the number of primary nurses and protect their health and well-being from excessive workload, the Australian government provides educational financial assistance (\$9, 316) to nursing students (Kearney & Thomas, 2008: p. 5).

*** End ***

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