



The Hon Anika Wells MP
Minister for Aged Care
Minister for Sport
Member for Lilley

Ref No: MC23-017250

Mr Gerard Hayes
Secretary
Health Services Union NSW/ACT/QLD
Heather.Crichton@hsu.asn.au

Dear Mr Hayes

Thank you for your correspondence of 18 September 2023 regarding changes to COVID-19 transport protocols in HealthShare NSW Patient Transport Services.

I acknowledge the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on your members and staff, as well as across the public health and residential aged care sectors. I would like to thank you for your continued hard work and dedication in continuing to protect our most vulnerable.

The patient transport model that was implemented at the beginning of the pandemic aligned with the circumstances at the time, including when vaccination was unavailable or at low levels and there was a greater risk of transmission. Thankfully, the risk profile has now shifted in residential aged care homes and for older people with high rates of vaccinations, improved infection prevention and control (IPC) practices and lower risks of transmission. It would be reasonable to expect this reduced risk would apply in the patient transport setting.

Having said that, as Patient Transport Services are state government funded programs, the New South Wales Government Health Department has jurisdiction for all clinical decisions. This includes practices for transporting aged care residents to and from hospitals. In addition public health units are responsible for guidance on public health management of COVID-19 across settings, including residential aged care.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anika Wells'.

Anika Wells

16 October 2023

Copy: The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care