

2 August 2016

Ms Cheryl Vella  
Coroners Registrar  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
Southbank  
Victoria 3006

Dear Ms Vella,

**Re: Court ref: 2011 000727 – death of Dean W Wright**

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) acknowledges receipt of your letter dated 19 April 2016 regarding the death of Dean W Wright (Court ref: 2011 000727).

Pursuant to Section 72(2) of the Coroners Act 2008, the College responds to the recommendations as follows:

**Recommendation**

*That the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners consider including and/or enhancing a section in its Standards for General Practices to inform and advise general practitioners about their legal obligations when prescribing medications, especially those arising from section 33 of the DPCS Act and to provide opportunities for professional development relating to the safe prescription of 'drugs of dependence' to drug-dependent and non-drug dependent patients.*

*The RACGP Standards for General Practices (the Standards) are a template for quality care and risk management in Australian general practice. The RACGP is developing the next edition of the Standards and Resource Guide (5<sup>th</sup> edition) which will be launched in October 2017.*

The current draft of *Standard 2: Clinical Indicators* relates to areas that help practitioners to provide high quality clinical care to their patients. *Criterion 2.2 - Safe and quality use of medicines* lists useful resources and links including information on jurisdictional requirements relating to Schedule 4 and 8 medicines. The draft Standards will be piloted in 100 practices across Australia prior to release.

In the last couple of years, the RACGP has developed a range of professional development activities and published information relating to the safe prescription of drugs of dependence. These include:

**AFP Clinical Challenge**

- January/February 2013: Medications
- June 2014: Addictions

**gplearning online modules:**

- Benzodiazepine prescribing in general practice
- The prevention of alcohol and other drug problems in general practice



**check**, unit 522, Addictions, November 2015

In addition the RACGP Conference for General Practice GP15 held in Melbourne in 2015 featured a two-hour workshop on approaches for drug seeking patients. This workshop was repeated at the RACGP Victoria Drug & Alcohol Committee Conference in May 2016.

### **Recommendation**

*Pending implementation of a real-time prescription monitoring system, that the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners reminds its members about the PSIS and encourages them to use it whenever they have concerns that a patient may be abusing prescription medications.*

The Coroner has acknowledged the development of the RACGP clinical guideline *Prescribing drugs of dependence in general practice. Part A: Clinical Governance Framework* has been completed and provides practices with key principles, strategies, and tools for appropriately prescribing or not prescribing drugs of dependence. Of particular relevance to the Coroners recommendation is *4.1 Being an accountable prescriber of drugs of dependence*. This section of the guideline provides information on such matters as:

- The 'prescription traps'
- Working collaboratively
- Managing issues between multiple prescribers

Should you or the Coroner wish to discuss this further, please contact RACGP Victoria on (03) 8699 0468.

Yours sincerely

A/Prof Morton Rawlin  
RACGP Victoria – Faculty Chair