



# Secretary

Department of Health & Human Services

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26 FEB 2015

Ms Hannah Summerhayes  
Coroner's Registrar  
Coroner's Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Ms Summerhayes

**RE: COR 2012 002216 Investigation into the death of Daniel McKittrick**

Thank you for providing me a copy of the findings made with inquest including the recommendations into the death of Mr Daniel McKittrick.

The Department of Health & Human Services' (the department) response to the recommendation is as follows:

**Recommendation**

2. The Department of Health commission a review, in conjunction with relevant hospitals (St Vincent's and Royal Melbourne) of the systems of communication between service providers (Emergency Departments) for the purposes of providing early communication and notification between Emergency departments about patients who have attended an Emergency Department seeking or requiring mental health treatment or advice, but who leave that Emergency Department without being seen by a relevant medical practitioner. In short, I recommend a consideration of what aspects of the RAPID (or other) communication system could be improved by creating a notification system between Emergency Departments.

**Response**

The coroner's recommendation to conduct a review will be implemented.

The department will conduct a review in consultation with relevant stakeholders such as health services and Victoria Police to consider the options for change within the context of the significant complex issues raised in the department's previous submission to the Coroner (dated 17 October 2014) and existing and emerging work.

His Honour may wish to note that since Mr McKittrick's death there have been a number of independent initiatives which enhance the management of mental health consumers who require urgent support including:

### The Mental Health and Police Response (MHaP Response)

The MHaP Response initiative is being progressively implemented state wide from 2014-15 to 2017-18. The initiative, which involves a mental health clinician being rostered on to work with police in a dedicated response unit, responds to growing demand for acute mental health services in the community, to the needs of Victoria Police, and to the needs of health services and consumers and carers. Consumers will receive timely access to appropriate urgent mental health assessment and treatment in the community as well as brief interventions and follow up by clinical mental health services. This will also enhance interagency communication.

### Emergency Services Liaison Committees (ESLCs)

The committees comprise senior staff from the local police, ambulance, hospital emergency department and mental health services, as well as consumer and carer representatives to develop and update local protocols for inter-agency service cooperation and coordination, and address operational service issues.

### Emergency department management of patients that 'do not wait'

The department and individual health services currently monitor the numbers of patients that do not wait for treatment as it is an important indicator of quality and access in emergency departments. This includes monitoring if patients leave without treatment, after treatment started or after they received advice about other treatment options. Many emergency departments have procedures in place to follow up high risk patients that have left without being seen or treated.

### Enhancing information sharing between Victorian mental health services and Victoria Police Special Services Division (Critical Incident Response Unit)

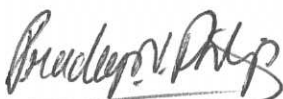
The relationship with Victoria Police and Victorian mental health services is being strengthened by an emerging project between the Victoria Police, Special Services Division including the Critical Incident Response Team and Special Operations Group and Melbourne Health, to explore information needs and enhance timely access to accurate and up to date clinical information through a dedicated portal such as a triage service.

The department supports a more targeted and timely response to a person needing urgent mental health support. The department will commence the implementation of the recommendation to conduct a review by 13 March 2015, regarding the options for changes to and/or enhancement of the communication and notification system between emergency departments with respect to mental health consumers within the context of:

- the capabilities of the information technology systems
- privacy and confidentiality legislation
- health services procedures and policies
- existing procedures, policies and initiatives.

Should you have any further queries please contact Matthew Hercus, Manager, Programs and Performance, Mental Health Branch, Mental Health, Wellbeing, Social Capital and Ageing Division, phone 9096 0459 or email [Matthew.hercus@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:Matthew.hercus@health.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Dr Pradeep Philip**  
Secretary