

21 July 2017

Ms Marde Bevan  
Coroners Registrar  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Ms Bevan,

**Investigation into the death of Ahmed Ali**  
**Court ref: COR 2014 004717**

I refer to your letter to Adjunct Professor Cornelissen dated 1 June 2017 in which you seek a response from Werribee Mercy Health (**'the hospital'**) with regards to the recommendations of Coroner Olle in his finding dated 25 May 2017 in relation to the death of Ahmed Ali (**'the patient'**).

Please note I am the Chief Executive of the hospital's Health Services and am best placed to provide you with a response.

I note that the Coroner has recommended the following:

1. the Department of Health and Human Services (**'DHHS'**) mandate that hospital emergency departments (**'ED'**) provide a legible discharge summary if it is reasonably foreseeable that upon discharge from the treating department, follow-up of a patient is required by another health service or health professional; and
2. the hospital's ED use the patient's case as a specific example to educate staff with regards to:
  - (a) the Royal Children's Hospital's Clinical Practice Guidelines for assessment and treatment of a febrile child;
  - (b) the importance of evaluating hydration status and taking a blood pressure in paediatric patients;
  - (c) the importance of considering differential diagnoses;
  - (d) the importance of formal follow-up arrangements and provision of verbal and written discharge information to families; and
  - (e) consulting specialist paediatric services in certain situations, such as when there have been multiple presentations to medical services for the same issue.

The hospital is grateful for the opportunity to provide a response in relation to the Coroner's recommendations.

Although Recommendation 1 is directed towards the DHHS, we have already taken measures to address this issue at the hospital. Since early 2015, a summary of medical care has been documented electronically within the hospital's ED and a copy of this is forwarded to a patient's nominated GP on discharge.

With regards to Recommendation 2, as a consequence of this particular investigation, the hospital has already implemented the following changes to its practices:

- a) all ED staff have been educated with regards to the existence of the Royal Children's Hospital Clinical Practice Guidelines for assessment and treatment of a febrile child, which are now widely available on the ED's intranet;
- b) medical and nursing ED staff are required to attend the APLS – advanced Paediatric Life Support course, which teaches a structured approach to the diagnosis and management of a seriously ill child. This course is designed to increase the confidence, awareness, skills and abilities of ED staff to assess and respond to a range of paediatric emergencies. This education is ongoing;
- c) the case has been featured in several internal departmental meetings and will be included in such meetings annually as a means of reinforcement;
- d) as mentioned above, a summary of medical care is now documented electronically within the Werribee Mercy Hospital ED and a copy of this is forwarded to a patient's nominated GP on discharge to facilitate continuity of care. When appropriate, patients are also provided with information printouts and management plans to supplement verbal instructions relating to their condition, its management and any follow-up;
- e) education with respect to how ED staff diagnose, assess and manage paediatric cases continues to increase with paediatricians now attending regular ED education sessions;
- f) the increased education in paediatrics has improved the ability and confidence of ED staff to deal with paediatric conditions. There has also been an increase in paediatric support at the registrar and consultant levels. In addition to the general registrar cover, we now have an additional four paediatric registrars on staff, where previously the cover was an on-call paediatric consultant. Currently we have 10 part-time paediatric consultants, two available during the day and one on-call after hours. They are available to take telephone calls for advice and attend patients in the ED if requested; and
- g) the relationship between the ED of Werribee Mercy and the ED of Western Hospital Sunshine has strengthened and the latter is now an alternate venue for sourcing paediatric emergency support.

Yours faithfully,



**Adj Prof Linda Mellors**  
Chief Executive - Health Services  
Mercy Health