



Secretary

Department of Health and Human Services

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Emma Lindsey
Coroners Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
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Dear Ms Lindsey

RE - COR 2014 004464: Investigation into the death of Cody Taulongo.

The Department of Health and Human Services (the department) has reviewed the following recommendation and provides a response below:

1. *That the Victorian Department of Health Director Quality, Safety and Patient Experience consider mandating a formal requirement that when a patient is discharged from hospital with a plan for follow-up within 48 hours by another medical service, a member of the discharging team should personally contact the receiving medical service to effect patient hand-over.*

Department's response:

The department requires health services to establish mechanisms to provide effective handover and timely transfer of care, appropriate to the patient's needs. The department will directly write to health service chief executive officers and directors of emergency medicine to reinforce the expectation that, where a patient needs follow up within a 48 hour time period, the service is required to:

- exercise good clinical practice and make direct contact with the relevant practitioner at/before patient discharge
- make contact to ensure that the patient has received follow up.

This advice will also be promoted through clinical leadership forums and hospital circulars and can be raised with individual services at performance meetings as required.

In 2016-17, the department will undertake a review of the *Transfer of care from acute inpatient services: Guidelines for managing the transfer of care of acute inpatients from Victoria's public health services* (the guidelines). These guidelines contain advice on discharge planning and transfer of care and are available at:

<<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/acute-care/acute-medicine/discharge-and-transfer>>

The review in 2016-17 will identify areas for improvement and develop supporting materials to assist health services to implement the key objectives of the guidelines:

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- Improving communication between health services, the patient, their family and carer, their general practitioner and community service providers
- Supporting health services to review their existing discharge and transfer of care practices and to implement more effective transfer of care processes
- Promoting consistent transfer of care practices across Victorian health services.

The refreshed guidelines will reiterate the above requirements to health services.

Further, all Victorian public hospitals and health services are required to be accredited against the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards which include a Clinical Handover Standard (the standard). The standard aims to ensure that health services implement systems to enable timely, relevant and structured clinical handover to support safe patient care. It includes a Clinical Handover Solutions Matrix to assist services to prepare all relevant documentation, monitoring requirements and organisation-wide reporting. Each health service can customise the process to suit its speciality, service type and patient needs.

In its communications on clinical handover, the department will reiterate the existence of these resources to the health services.

In 2015-16 the department introduced a funding incentive related to a 'transition of care' indicator. The indicator, which was developed to improve processes related to discharge planning, will continue to be monitored in 2016-17.

Please contact Brigid Clarke, Manager, Consumer Partnerships and Quality Standards on 9096 6176 should you would like to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely


Kym Peake
Secretary
25/7/2016