



BallaratHealthServices
Putting your health first

MEDICAL SERVICES

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Ref: PGR:CA
dir/PGR 2015 COR 2009 002381

Ms Cheryl Vella
Coroners Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
6 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Ms Vella

**Re: Response to the Coroner's Recommendations
Case Number 2009 002381**

I refer to your letter received by Ballarat Health Services on 13 February 2015 regarding the recommendations made by the Coroner relating to the inquest into the death of Ms Joan Coutts.

The recommendations have been considered by Ballarat Health Services and its responses to the recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1

That Ballarat Health Services considers providing further education to staff about the triage of Emergency Department patients.

The Coroner's recommendation has been implemented.

The implementation has been part of a continuous service improvement designed to improve the access of clinical staff to education regarding triage and clinical care of patients.

On 1 June 2009, Ballarat Health Services introduced a 0.50 EFT clinical nurse educator for the emergency department. This role is ongoing and focussed on staff orientation, triage education and patient documentation.

This new clinical nurse educator role has brought a coordinated approach to triage education which includes assessment using the Emergency Triage Education Kit (E TEK) produced by the Federal Department of Health. A key aim of E TEK (which includes specific information about pain assessment) is consistent application of the Australasian Triage Scale. All staff commencing a triage role at Ballarat Health Services must complete the E TEK training and pass an assessment. Once the E TEK has been successfully completed, the clinical nurse educator observes and evaluates the individual's triage assessments of patients. In 2011 Ballarat Health Services was successful in making the E TEK an online learning tool for its staff.

To ensure consistency between night and day staff, the night duty triage staff are rostered two months day shift as part of their yearly cycle.

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Recommendation 2

That Ballarat Health Services consider allocating specific responsibility for the completion of the Discharge Tool within the Emergency Department, to ensure that adequate discharge planning occurs, and that the rationale for discharge decisions is apparent.

The Coroner's recommendation has been implemented.

Within the Ballarat Health Services Emergency Department, the clinician organising or authorising the discharge of a patient is responsible for both developing and documenting an appropriate discharge plan.

The discharge plan is be recorded in the patient's progress notes. Ballarat Health Services has been continually improving the design of the progress notes to ensure the discharge plan is easily located within the patient's clinical notes and the notes are structured to make completion of the discharge plan part of a logical sequence of patient care.

Ballarat Health Services is continuously seeking to improve its discharge planning processes and to this end is involved in a VMIA (Victorian Managed Insurance Authority) sponsored discharge research/quality assurance project.

In the long-term, Ballarat Health Services aims to implement an electronic health record system within the emergency department that will incorporate specific triggers and alerts to respond to risk factors at discharge.

Please contact me on **03 5320 4278** if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



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