



Department of Health

GPO Box 4541
Melbourne Victoria 3001
Telephone: 1300 253 942
www.health.vic.gov.au
DX210311

05 SEP 2014



Office of the Secretary

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Ms Mandy Chancellor
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11 222 Exhibition St
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms Chancellor

1217

RE: COR 2008 002517 - Investigation into the death of Mark J Bethell

Thank you for providing me a copy of the inquest findings, including the recommendations, into the death of Mr Mark J Bethell.

In response to the relevant recommendations made by the Coroner:

Recommendation 1:

I recommend that the Department of Health investigates how best to facilitate arrangement for inter hospital transfer of voluntary (and involuntary) patients. This, in my view, might reasonably involve discussion between such units at Consultant level.

Response

An alternative to the coroner's recommendation is being implemented.

The Department of Health recognises the importance of timely access to inpatient beds and is undertaking a bed coordination initiative that aims to address access to mental health beds statewide to offset long waits in emergency departments.

Good clinical practice includes comprehensive clinical handover. In addition all health services as part of their accreditation requirement under the National Quality and Safety Health Service Standards are required to meet *Standard 6: Clinical Handover*. The most recent Risk Watch newsletter from the department, sent to all health services, highlights, the importance of clinical handover in emergency departments:

[http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/F18F6C2CE4D18E7ACA257CDF0081091C/\\$FILE/RiskWatch_Volume11_Issue2.pdf](http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/F18F6C2CE4D18E7ACA257CDF0081091C/$FILE/RiskWatch_Volume11_Issue2.pdf).

Recommendation 2

I recommend that the ongoing training of CATT clinicians generally should further emphasize the need for risk assessment undertaken in respect of suspected Borderline Personality Disorder diagnosed patients to particularly address safety around the patient's potential for the (ongoing) self-administration of prescribed medication.

Response

This will be implemented.

The Department of Health is committed to the ensuring our clinical mental health workforce has the capability and capacity to provide quality mental health care and is developing a specialist mental health workforce framework to support this. The department will request that Spectrum, a state-funded program that delivers training to mental health clinicians on treatment of people with borderline personality disorder, prioritises training with CATT clinicians.

Recommendation 3

I recommend that where it is known by CATT clinicians that such patients are returning to community facilities (like Ozanum House) that relevant information and advice determined as a result of compliance with Recommendation 2 above is passed on to the manager of such a facility. This may allow facility staffers to collect medication supplies in appropriate cases and hold them centrally. It will also permit the further delivery of that medication in a manner that complies with obligations created by Occupation and Health and safety legislation.

Response

This has been implemented

The department supports the importance of good communication between health care providers and where support agencies have responsibility for specific aspects of care subject to confidentiality and privacy requirements. This advice has been provided to services via the Chief Psychiatrist Guideline: *Information sharing between area mental health services and psychiatric disability support services*. This guideline will be updated in due course to reflect the *Mental Health Act 2014*

http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/cpg/information_sharing.pdf.

Yours sincerely



Dr Pradeep Philip
Secretary