



Department of Health

Secretary

02 SEP 2013



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Mr Jeff Dart
Coroners Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Dart

Court Reference: 2055/08, Ellen M O'Connor

I am writing in response to your letter addressed to Ms Frances Diver, Executive Director, Hospital and Health Service Performance Division dated 25 May 2012 regarding recommendations made by the coroner according to the *Coroners Act 2008* (Vic) (the Act)

1. that via the Victorian Department of Health Quality, Safety and Patient Experience and Hospital and Health Service Performance Unit, Hospital Administrators direct clinicians/prescribers to the "Therapeutic Guideline: Antibiotic" resources in their individual hospitals and alert them to changes in the "Therapeutic Guideline: Antibiotic" 2010/edition 14 relevant to the prescription of gentamicin for empirical and/or directed therapy.
2. given the identified variability in resources available to assist clinicians/prescribers in calculating the appropriate dose of gentamicin, patient safety would be enhanced if, via the Victorian Department of Health Quality, Safety and Patient Experience and Hospital and Health Service Performance Unit, Hospital Administrators defined a clear consultation pathway for prescribers to access senior medical staff with a specialist interest in infectious diseases to assist with gentamicin decision making.

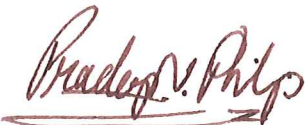
In response to the above recommendation, the Department of Health (the department) wrote to all Victorian health services stipulating the Coroner's recommendations and alerted the availability of electronic resources in commonly used Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic, Monthly Index of Medical Specialities (MIMS), and clinical practice guidelines where cautions and guidance for safe prescribing of potentially nephrotoxic antibacterial drugs for the advanced age group is specified.

In addition to this, health services were reminded of the availability of the Clinicians Health Channel (CHC) accessible twenty hours a day, seven days a week for clinicians, hospital staff, allied health, working in Victorian public funded hospitals. The CHC is an online clinical information portal supported by the department. This knowledge portal is a repository of up-to-date evidence-based material primarily for point of care decision making and ongoing professional development. It has a strong clinical focus incorporating everything from best practice reviews, drug and medication databases to online electronic journal content.

In a future edition of the 2012 Riskwatch newsletter, the department will highlight the recommendations for prescribers and clinicians to consult senior medical staff for guidance on prescribing potentially nephrotoxic antibiotics, including a reference to the CHC and availability of Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic.

If you require further information please contact Ms Theresa Williamson, Acting Manager, Quality and Safety Programs, telephone 9096 7258.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Pradeep Philip". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal red line.

Dr Pradeep Philip
Secretary