



TheAlfred

7 September 2012

Coroner Audrey Jamieson  
Coroners' Court of Victoria  
Level 11,  
222 Exhibition Street  
Melbourne 3000

55 Commercial Road  
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Victoria 3181 Australia  
Telephone 03 9076 2000  
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Dear Coroner

**RE: Inquest into the Death of RAJESH PALA. Ref: 2148/09**

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ALFRED PSYCHIATRY  
Ph: 9076 2218  
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I refer to your findings into the death of RAJESH PALA, a client who was discharged from Alfred Psychiatry inpatient unit and subsequently died of mixed drug toxicity within 7 days of his discharge on April 24<sup>th</sup> 2009.

I note the findings included a recommendation **that the Alfred Psychiatric Unit and Hanover Welfare Services review the Referral Form/Discharge Plan with the view to including an additional space for "Issues of concern to the patient/client" and "Action Taken"**. The findings noted that this inclusion of the patient/client's subjective concerns and the action initiated, if any, will assist case workers in communicating with clients on their arrival at Hanover House Southbank and enable the case workers to address, as far as possible, the client's concerns.

I have facilitated a review of your findings with our partner organisation Sacred Heart Mission and would like to make comments in relation to improvements made in the transfer of care arrangements post discharge from inpatient psychiatric care since Mr Pala's death and planned improvements in response to your recommendation.

**Improvements made since date of death in relation to transfer of clinical information from inpatient unit to external providers.**

**Alfred Psychiatry Discharge Summary** –At the time of Mr Pala's death in 2009, one discharge summary was prepared for all patients and was made available to community service providers within 7 days of discharge. In the case of Rajesh Pala, the discharge summary was not received by Hanover House Southbank until day 7 post discharge. In 2010 an improved system was introduced in order to improve timeliness of information transfer to providers. The change included the development of an interim discharge summary prepared on the day of discharge. Recent audit results for May/June 2012 reveal patient discharge summaries are sent to external providers within 24hrs of discharge 85% of the time. We will continue to strive to improve this in order for timely transfer of information to achieve continuity of care.

The Alfred  
Part of Alfred Health  
ABN 27 318 956 319

**Plans to improve transfer of care based on coronial recommendation.**

Since receiving the inquest findings in relation to Rajesh Pala's death, Alfred Psychiatry and Hanover Southbank have met to review the findings and plan improvements. We have agreed to improve the Alfred Psychiatry Discharge Plan to include a section on patient subjective experience and this will be included in a revised discharge plan. Hanover has agreed to review and update their referral form to include a section on patient subjective experience.

A meeting has been established between Hanover and inpatient staff to strengthen our partnership and understandings with respect to transfer of clinical care between services, and facilitate timely action in response to your recommendation.

The progress against agreed action plan in response to your recommendation made will be monitored through the Alfred Psychiatry Clinical Risk Committee and the Alfred Health Clinical Review Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Shields', written in a cursive style.

**Dr Rob Shields**  
Acting Director, Alfred Psychiatry