

10 July 2025

BY EMAIL: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Niels Gabriels
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Niels

Investigation into the death of Barbara Anne Deal
Court Ref: COR 2022 003557

We refer to Coroner Jamieson's Finding into the death of Barbara Anne Deal, which included a recommendation for Healthscope to respond. The Coroner recommended that:

'In the interests of promoting public health and safety and reducing like deaths, I recommend that Healthscope consult the 'Victorian sentinel event guide (Version 2)' published by Safer Care Victoria (VSEG) and provide education to its clinicians on their responsibility to identify, report and investigate patient deaths which constitute sentinel events'.

Healthscope acknowledges the Coroner's recommendation and notes as follows:

1. Healthscope has reviewed and continues to utilise the VSEG to ensure its processes for identifying, reporting and investigating sentinel events reflect best practice.
2. Healthscope has conducted focused education programs for clinicians and staff so that they understand their responsibilities regarding sentinel events. Some examples of the education provided include the following:
 - (a) Overview of Victoria Incident Reporting Requirements for new Directors of Nursing and Quality Managers;
 - (b) Quality Manager Role and Responsibilities in Incident Management including Serious Adverse Patient Safety Event (**SAPSE**) Reviews;
 - (c) Director of Nursing Role and Responsibilities in Incident Management including SAPSE Reviews;
 - (d) Statutory Duty of Candour and SAPSE Review; and
 - (e) Adverse Patient Safety Events.These sessions were delivered through presentations and case-based learning to ensure accessibility and engagement.
3. Healthscope has a well-established and comprehensive procedure and review process, as outlined in the enclosed *Healthscope, Statutory Duty of Candour – Victorian Sites Only manual dated October 2023*. This document provides guidance for staff regarding their responsibilities to identify, report and investigate sentinel events.
4. Healthscope maintains a strong professional relationship with Safer Care Victoria (**SCV**), regularly liaising with SCV regarding sentinel events and SAPSE reviews to ensure alignment with state-wide standards and continuous improvement.

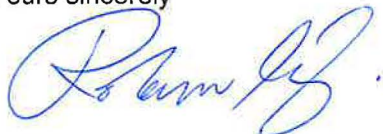
Healthscope otherwise notes that there are aspects of the Findings that may benefit from further clarification and consideration:

1. at paragraph [56], it is documented that the Coroners Prevention Unit noted an absence of documented venous thromboembolism (**VTE**) risk assessment during Ms Deal's admission. Notwithstanding a lack of formal documentation, Healthscope respectfully submits that Ms Deal's medical records reflect active consideration of her VTE risk and anticoagulation management during her admission. For example, on 2 June 2022, a cardiologist determined that bridging therapy was not required when withholding Ms Deal's Apixaban and Aspirin pre-operatively. Similarly, on 22 June 2022, a registrar documented that the cardiologist recommended continuing Apixaban as a single agent. These entries suggest that Ms Deal's VTE risk and anticoagulation management were addressed as part of her overall care, even if not consistently recorded in a standardised VTE risk assessment tool. This context provides additional insight into the care provided during Ms Deal's admission; and
2. at paragraph [65], it is noted that the Clinical Review Committee (**CRC**) did not include an independent expert. To clarify, the CRC included a Visiting Medical Officer clinician expert who was independent of the case and not an employee of Healthscope.

Healthscope remains committed to improving public health and safety and values the opportunity to respond to the Coroner's recommendations. Healthscope again offers it sincere condolences to Ms Deal's family and friends.

Should you require further information or clarification, please contact Robyn English, DON

Yours sincerely



Robyn English
Director of Nursing
Melbourne Private Hospital

Enclosure: Healthscope, Statutory Duty of Candour – Victorian Sites Only manual