



Department of Justice

Secretary

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Coroner Audrey Jamieson
Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11
222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Coroner Jamieson

Inquest into the death of Andrew Timothy Davies - COR 2007 3554

I refer to the recommendations made in the inquest into the death of Andrew Davies delivered on 19 July 2013.

I note that recommendations one through six refer directly to the health services, policies and procedures of Pacific Shores Healthcare (now GEO Care), the contracted prison health service provider. I am aware GEO Care is providing a written response to these recommendations to the Coroner's Court directly.

In relation to recommendation seven, the Department of Justice responds below.

- 7. That Justice Health incorporates the above recommendations into its service agreement with Pacific Shores Healthcare or any subsequent provider of health services to HMP Ararat, with the aim of ensuring the delivery of health services within the correctional health environment are at a standard comparable to primary health services received by the general public in Victoria.*

This recommendation has been implemented by the Department through the development of the *Justice Health Quality Framework 2011* (the Quality Framework) and the *Justice Health, Health Policy 2011* (the Health Policy).

The *Primary Health Services Agreement 2012* (the Health Services Agreement) between the State and GEO Care explicitly states that GEO Care must provide health services in compliance with and as contemplated by the requirements and Standards set out in the Quality Framework and the Health Policy.

The Quality Framework was introduced on 1 July 2012 across both public and private prisons to guide the delivery of consistently safe, high-quality and evidence-based health care. The Quality Framework incorporates the principles of delivery of care as expressed in the Health Policy, specific Standards to which care must be delivered, and the structures, systems and measures by which the quality of care is monitored and improved.

The Health Policy provides a strategic framework linking the international, national and state legislative and policy context while the Standards describe the required functional outcomes of service delivery and provide statements about expected outcomes of care and service. The Standards detail the key requirements for the achievement of quality outcomes to ensure safe, efficient and effective health services for prisoners.

Relationship between recommendations and Quality Framework

With regard to recommendation one, relating to the emergency management of prisoners presenting with chest pain, the Department refers to Quality Framework *Standard 1.1: Access*. Standard 1.1 directs that all prisoners have timely access to a coordinated range of health services provided by a multidisciplinary team across Victorian prisons. In particular, Standards 1.1.13 to 1.1.18 articulate that all prisoners have access to emergency care, including hospital and ambulance services as required and that health staff are competent to deliver emergency care.

With regard to recommendations two and three relating to the establishment of policy and procedures for the review and communication of investigative tests, the Department refers to Quality Framework *Standard 3.5: Allied health and diagnostic services*. Standard 3.5 sets out the expectation that prisoners have access to allied health and diagnostic services as clinically indicated in line with community standards to meet their treatment needs.

In particular, Standard 3.5.1 states that all allied health and diagnostic services are delivered in prisons in accordance with contemporary professional guidelines and requirements. Standard 3.5.2 stipulates the need to ensure correct patient, correct site and correct procedure protocols are in place for all diagnostic and invasive procedures. Within the reporting requirements of the Quality Framework the service provider is required to report on compliance with the Key Result Area relating to the number of patients receiving timely diagnostic results.

With regard to recommendation four relating to the implementation of a communication system specific for the purposes of following review of prisoner patients, the Department refers to Quality Framework *Standard 3.1 Delivery of healthcare in the Victorian prison system justice health*. In particular, Standard 3.1.2 stipulates that the health service provider ensure the ongoing health needs of the prisoner are assessed, reviewed and appropriately managed.

I also note the Department remains committed to implementing an electronic health record system so that there will be a single electronic medical record for each prisoner across all prison sites. This system will improve the communication of health information and the ability to effectively coordinate the management of prisoner health care across the prison system. Following a select tender process, the state executed a contract with the preferred software supplier, Intrahealth Limited on 29 August 2012. The implementation project has commenced for which Intrahealth's Profile HCC product is being re-branded as JCare. Implementation of JCare in the Victorian prison system is scheduled to commence in 2014.

With regard to recommendations five and six relating to the implementation of an induction program and ongoing professional development for health staff to ensure awareness and familiarisation with GEO Care's protocols, policies and procedures the Department refers to Quality Framework *Standard 4.2: Workforce capacity and capability*. Standard 4.2 stipulates that the health service provider ensures it has a competent workforce and provides a satisfying working environment for health service staff. GEO are required to provide formal orientation and induction programs for medical and nursing employees and contractors. As per the Health Service Agreement, GEO Care is also required to submit an annual training plan to Justice Health.

The Standards relating to workforce capacity and capability are based on national standards and guidelines including the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) Evaluation and Quality Improvement Program (EQuIP) quality and clinical governance standards for accreditation. The Health Services Agreement sets out the requirement that GEO Care must achieve healthcare accreditation for interim and full surveys for all services over the course of the Health Services Agreement under Reporting Area 10.1 of Part III of the Quality Framework. GEO Care has achieved accreditation with the ACHS until July 2015.

Justice Health has reviewed the actions and initiatives undertaken by GEO Care in response to the recommendations and is confident that it has implemented appropriate procedures.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Larissa Strong, Director, Justice Health on (03) 9947 1625.

Yours sincerely



Greg Wilson
Secretary