

20 March, 2014

Judge Ian Gray
State Coroner
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000



NorthWestern Mental Health

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The Royal Melbourne Hospital
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Dear Coroner Gray

Ref: Finding Into Deaths With Inquest - Kylie Fowler, Samantha Fowler, Melanie Maher and Mathew Maher: Court Reference: 2011/ 0097, 0098, 0099 & 0100

NorthWestern Mental Health (NWMH) has noted with interest the Findings in the above referenced Inquests.

NWMH also notes the Recommendation which applies in all four Findings:

..."The safety of children, teenagers and young adults is of paramount importance in this community. No stone should be left unturned to at least explore what measures / arrangements could be put in place to deliver to the children of severely mentally ill people, (even those who have demonstrated a propensity for violence towards themselves or their children) to equip them with a knowledge and understanding of the risks which may give them a chance to avoid, or report or notify the behavior of their parent in the future to relevant authorities in a way that would protect them and others"

1. To improve the access to programs specific to improving mental health literacy for children, teenagers and young adults of parents with a mental illness, the Department of Health, Mental Health, Drugs and regions review the scope of the FaPMI strategy across all public mental health services and regions in Victoria, including:

- Access by public mental health service families to peer support programs such as CHAMPS and PATS, regardless of where they live in Victoria.
- Access by families from other services that come into contact with families where a parent has a mental illness or significant mental health issue such as alcohol and drug services, family support services, child and youth services, community health, Child Protection and schools

NWMH fully supports this recommendation and would welcome the Department of Health extending the FaPMI strategy more broadly across Victoria with the aim of achieving the following objectives;

- Increase the capacity of specialist mental health services (clinical and PDRSS) to provide a family focused response to the parenting needs of their client's children.
- Increase the capacity of specialist mental health service network partners to recognize and respond appropriately to parental mental illness.
- Establish and strengthen the capacity of networks and support structures involving mental health services and their network partners, in partnership with consumers and carers, to support the needs of all family members through collaborative approaches to service provision.

Provider of mental health services to:

Melbourne Health
The Royal Melbourne Hospital
Western Health
Sunshine Hospital
Western Hospital
Northern Health
The Northern Hospital
Broadmeadows Health Service
Bundoora Extended Care Centre



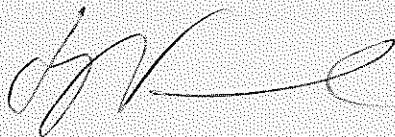
MELBOURNE HEALTH

North Western Mental Health is
part of Melbourne Health Service

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This recommendation is also completely consistent with the draft Bill 2014 of the Mental Health Act, Victoria. In particular, the Bill seeks to recognize (1) children, young persons and other dependents of persons receiving mental health services should have their needs, wellbeing and safety recognized and protected (2) carers (including children) for persons receiving mental health services should be involved in decisions about assessment, treatment and recovery, whenever this is possible and (3) carers (including children) for persons receiving mental health services should have their role recognized, respected and supported.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Ruth Vine
Executive Director NWMH

cc. Associate Professor Suresh Sundram

Robyn Humphries

Peter Kelly