



5 October 2012

Coroner KMW Parkinson
Coroners Court of Victoria
Level 11
222 Exhibition Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000

AlfredHealth

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Dear Coroner Parkinson

I refer to your findings handed down on 16 July 2012 following the Inquest into the death of Mr Ruben Chand.

Your Honour made two recommendations concerning Alfred Health.

In accordance with section 72(3) of the Coroners Act 2008, I enclose the response of Alfred Health to your Honour's recommendations.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Way
Chief Executive



**INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF MR RUBEN CHAND
CORONER'S RECOMMENDATIONS DIRECTED AT ALFRED HEALTH
RESPONSE OF ALFRED HEALTH**

Coroner's Recommendation

That when a patient is transferred from one public hospital to another, information about their intubation status and any difficulty with intubation be recorded and conveyed to the receiving hospital.

Response by Alfred Health:

The Coroner's recommendation does not distinguish between time-critical and non-time-critical patient transfers. This response will deal with each category in turn.

Non-time critical patient transfer

Non-time-critical patient transfer occurs when a stabilised patient needs to be transferred, either 'forward' to a higher level of care or 'back' to a lower level of care or closer to home, and the attending clinician or designated person has determined that:

- the patient transfer is not urgent and that the patient is stable to transfer
- the patient is unlikely to require transfer or transport under emergency conditions irrespective of their acuity (high, medium or low).

The non-time-critical patient is also referred to as a non-emergency patient.

The Victorian Quality Council (VQC) has designed a form that is intended for non-time-critical patient transfer. It provides two places where a transferring hospital can record information about intubation status and any difficulties with intubation: page 1 "Situation" which includes a reference to "Respiratory Management Plan" and page 2 "Specialty-specific information" which allows for a patient's difficult intubation status to be recorded.

Time-critical patient transfer

Time-critical patient transfer occurs when a patient requires emergency care at the closest appropriate hospital in the shortest time possible to achieve early intervention and stabilisation. This patient will require transfer and transport under emergency conditions. The time-critical patient is also referred to as an emergency patient.

The VQC form is not suitable for time-critical patient transfers. As a result, and in response to the Coroner's Recommendation, The Alfred ICU consultants and Adult Retrieval Victoria (ARV) have developed a new form for these patients.

The Alfred ICU consultants have reviewed a number of transfer forms currently available and in use including those from ARV and the VQC, as well as a number from overseas, but none addressed these concerns adequately

The Alfred ICU consultants then developed a transfer form which addressed these issues as well as a number of others currently not being addressed, including what other invasive lines have been inserted into the patient and when they were inserted, as well as the presence of infectious isolates warranting isolation, such as TB.

This new form was then circulated for comment to The Alfred's Emergency Department and Clinical Governance and Quality unit and to ARV.

The form has now been finalized by The Alfred and ARV and the roll-out process has been agreed with ARV as follows:

1. ARV will add additional 'fields' to its coordination and retrieval paperwork in the next run of print, e.g. Infectious status, intubation details and venous / arterial access details.
2. ARV will roll out the form on behalf of The Alfred. ARV will require referring hospitals to utilise the form (or an electronic-version in future) for all critical care transfers. ARV believes this can be achieved easily in the next 3-6 months.
3. ARV Clinical Coordinators, Retrieval Consultants & RASO staff will be advised of the need to collect this information as part of the retrieval process in the meantime.

The Critical Patient Referral Form has been uploaded onto The Alfred ICU website (alfredicu.org.au), on the home page and all referring hospitals are requested to complete it and fax it to The Alfred ICU.

It is envisaged that this will become part of the patient's Alfred medical record.

Coroner's Recommendation

That the Alfred Hospital initiate discussions with the major public health services in order to achieve processes to this end.

Response by Alfred Health:

ARV is requiring the new form to be used in all time-critical patient transfers between public health services in Victoria.

The VQC form is used for non-time-critical patient transfers in Victoria. The Chief Executives of all Victorian public health services are about to receive a letter from the Commission for Hospital Improvement (a Division within the Victorian Department of Health) reminding health services that the VQC form is for non- time-critical transfers. It will also inform them that a change has been made to the VQC form to include a space for information on intubation status in case there is a non-time-critical patient who is intubated and requiring an inter-hospital transfer.