



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Health and Ageing**

Ms Emma Lindsey  
Coroners Registrar  
Coroner's Court of Victoria  
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street  
Melbourne, VIC, 3000

**Court ref: COR 2007 001399**  
**COR 2007 001397**  
**COR 2007 001371**  
**COR 2007 001423**

**INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATHS AT BROUGHTON HALL**

Dear Ms Lindsey

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the inquest finding including recommendations made by Coroner Jennifer Coate in relation to the investigation into the deaths at Broughton Hall in Victoria in 2007.

I have noted the Coroner's recommendations include "1. To ensure appropriate preparation for and management of an infectious outbreak in an aged care facility:

- a) That the Department of Health (in consultation with the Department of Health and Ageing (Cth)) introduce a clear regime which mandates aged care facilities to report infectious disease outbreaks in the facility to the Department of Health. An infectious disease outbreak for this purpose is unexplained vomiting and diarrhoea in two or more residents and/or staff within 72 hours of each other.
  
- b) In consultation with the Department of Health and Ageing (Cth), I recommend that the Victorian Department of Health require aged care facilities to have a designated Infection Control Manager. The role of the Infection Control Manager should include (i) outbreak prevention measures; (ii) ensuring readiness for infectious outbreak via documented procedures that are disseminated to and are accessible to all staff; compulsory training regimes for all staff; availability of all necessary equipment and manuals and (iii) co-ordinating the management of any outbreak including appropriate communication of all notifications and advice to all relevant entities, staff, treating doctors and affected families; identification of the cause; liaising as between all relevant agencies and persons as to the results of any faecal (or other testing for infectious disease) and notifications to the Victorian Department of Health".

In relation to recommendation 1(a), aged care facilities must adhere to the infection control guidelines developed by the relevant state or territory public health authority in the event of a possible outbreak of gastroenteritis. Infection control guidelines in states and territories are administered by their respective governments. Any change to these arrangements is a matter for state and territory governments.

In relation to recommendation 1(b), all Australian Government subsidised aged care facilities must comply with the *Aged Care Act 1997* (the Act) at all times. The current Aged Care Accreditation Standards require Commonwealth subsidised aged care services to provide a safe and comfortable environment that ensures quality of life and welfare for residents, staff and visitors. Item 4.7 specifically states that an effective infection control program must be in place.

The circumstances of each facility can vary considerably in relation to infection control, including in relation to environmental, structural, technological and physical factors e.g. the size of the home and its location (remoteness). The risk factors that apply to individuals residing at the facility should also be taken into account in determining appropriate infection control arrangements. For these reasons, the Department considers that within the context of the Accreditation Standards and the state and territory governments' legislative and administrative processes, individual aged care facilities should continue to implement infection control strategies that are appropriate to their circumstances. The independent Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency assesses all facilities against the Accreditation Standards, including the requirement for effective infection control arrangements. All facilities must meet all Accreditation Standards or compliance action may be taken by the Department.

To assist aged care facilities to meet the accreditation requirements in relation to infection control, the Department also produces a "Gastroenteritis Kit for Aged Care: resources to assist residential aged care homes in preventing, identifying & managing outbreaks of gastroenteritis", a resource tool for aged care services to be used in conjunction with state and territory guidelines. This provides information on how to respond to gastroenteritis outbreaks and minimise risk.

Thank you for writing to the Department about the Coroner's report.

Yours sincerely



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Office of the Aged Care Quality and Compliance  
Department of Health and Ageing  
5 October 2012