



Department of Health

Secretary



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14 MAR 2013

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Ms Cheryl Vella
Coroner's Registrar
Coroner's Court of Victoria
Level 11, 222 Exhibition Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms Vella

Court Reference: COR 2007 000860/Lynette M Phillips

I am writing in response to your letter dated 13 December 2012 in relation to the following recommendation made by Coroner Jennifer Coate in the above case:

To provide timely assistance and support to health care professionals responding to family violence, I recommend that the Secretary to the Department of Health, in consultation with General Practice Victoria, and an appropriate family violence training organisation, conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a specialist family violence "on-call" service for general practitioners and other health care professionals in Victoria. The function of this service would be to provide specialist family violence information and advice to primary health care providers, including guidance on risk, safety planning and referral pathways to local services, whilst ensuring the organisation is sufficiently equipped and resourced to provide this support.

The Department notes the Coroner's recommendation that an "on-call" service is made available to practitioners and advises that a national "on-call" service has been in place since June 2011. The Commonwealth funded 1800RESPECT National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence phone and on-line counselling service as part of the Australian Government's commitment to reduce violence under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children*.

The 1800Respect service provides general practitioners and other health care professionals across Australia with guidance on professional responsibility and how to assist people experiencing family violence. This includes secondary consultation, risk assessment, safety planning guidelines, local service directory and links to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and Domestic Violence Resource Centre guidelines for GPs.

There appears to be a lack of awareness of the 1800RESPECT service, particularly in the GP sector. The Department of Health will continue to work with Office of Women's Affairs, Department of Human Services and General Practice Victoria and raise the awareness of this service. In particular the Department is mindful of several training opportunities targeting GPs and other health professionals during 2013, where the 1800RESPECT service may be actively promoted.

Yours sincerely



Dr Pradeep Philip
Secretary