

31 August 2020

Mikaela Meggetto
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria

By email to: cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au

Dear Registrar

Investigation into the death of [REDACTED]

COR 2016 2020

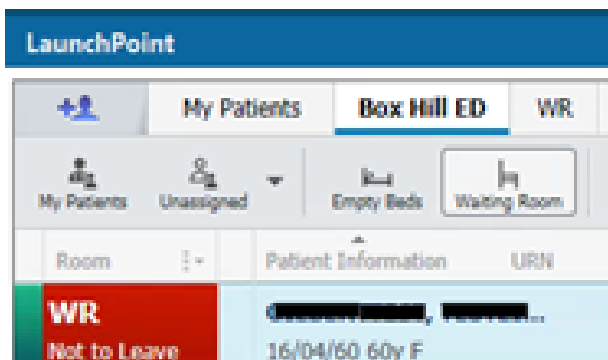
I refer to the letter dated 28 May 2020 enclosing the Finding, without inquest, into the death of [REDACTED] and outline below Eastern Health's response to the Coroner's recommendations.

Recommendation 1

In the interests of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths, I recommend that Eastern Health review the communication processes both within the emergency department and between emergency department staff and mental health staff to improve the accessibility and reliability of clinical information used by clinicians to make decisions about patients leaving the emergency department while waiting for a mental health assessment.

Eastern Health's response

Since early August 2020, a system upgrade has been made to Electronic Medical Record (EMR), which serves as the main electronic documentation platform for all Eastern Health emergency departments (including the on-site mental health clinicians). When clinically indicated, a highly visible "Not to Leave" alert (red section in screenshot below) can now be placed on the EMR front page "LaunchPoint" against the relevant patients, irrespective of whether they have been seen by mental health clinicians, or their legal status under the Mental Health Act. The alert is in addition to the usual clinical documentation.



Recommendation 2

In the interests of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths, I recommend that the Victoria Network of Smokefree Healthcare Services and Eastern Health develop and promote a guideline specific to the assessment, prevention and management of withdrawal symptoms from nicotine in patients while in an emergency department.

Eastern Health's response

Please see enclosed guidelines pertaining to this recommendation - "Tobacco Free Health Service Guideline" and "Nicotine Replacement Therapy Guideline". Over the last few years, the assessment and management of nicotine dependence have been standard practice in all settings across Eastern Health, including the emergency departments.

Recommendation 3

In the interests of promoting public health and safety and preventing like deaths, I recommend that Eastern Health review the systems for follow up of patients who leave the emergency department while waiting for a comprehensive mental health assessment, to ensure that they are in line with recommendations from the Department of Health and Human Services and the Chief Psychiatrist.

Eastern Health's response

As a result of this recommendation, an additional step to the existing practice guideline (Eastern Health Policy Number 227 - Missing or Absconded Patient or Resident Procedure) has been proposed (pending approval):

"Patients in Emergency Department who have been referred to Mental Health but not seen before absconding require an additional follow-up contact from Psychiatric Triage the next day".

Taking into consideration of the changeability of mental state and risk, this means that all patients who leave the Emergency Departments before being seen will receive at least a telephone contact the next day, regardless of the circumstances and the immediate risk assessment at the time. This would allow for a range of clinical responses to be considered depending on the outcome of that contact (e.g. emergency service response; referrals for assertive outreach or to existing health care providers; contact with nominated persons/next of kin).

Accordingly, I can confirm that the Coroner's Recommendations arising from the investigation into [REDACTED] death have been addressed by Eastern Health.

Yours sincerely,



Associate Professor Paul Katz
BSc., M.B.Ch.B.,FCPsych(SA), FRANZCP
Executive Clinical Director Mental Health
Associate Professor
School of Psychology and Psychiatry
Monash University
Tel: (03) 9895 4959
Fax: (03) 9895 4993
Email: paul.katz@easternhealth.org.au

Attachments

1. Tobacco Free Health Service Guideline (1888)
2. Nicotine replacement therapy guideline (286)
3. Missing or Absconded Patient or Resident Procedure (227)

Eastern Health 1300 342 255

Angliss Hospital Box Hill Hospital Healesville Hospital and Yarra Valley Health Maroondah Hospital Peter James Centre Wantirna Health Yarra Ranges Health

Statewide Services

Spectrum 03 8833 3050 Turning Point 03 8413 8413