



Mercy Health

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Monday 29th August 2011

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

Dear Ms Lindsey

Re: Angelo Lombardo
Coroner's recommendations
Court Reference: 4746/05

I write in response to your correspondence of 8 June 2011 regarding the recommendations made by the Coroner with regard to the inquest into the death of Mr. Angelo Lombardo.

The recommendations have been reviewed by the management of Mercy Mental Health and Werribee Mercy Hospital. Please find attached our service's written response to the Coroner's recommendations.

Yours sincerely

A/Prof Dean Stevenson
Director of Clinical Services
Mercy Mental Health



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Response to Coroners recommendations

Angelo Lombardo

Court reference: 4746/05

Recommendation 1

Werribee Mercy Hospital review:

- 1) all aspects of its security arrangements including the provision of adequate numbers of security personnel and**
- 2) seclusion rooms commensurate to the “better practice” of Austin Health as referred to in Dr. Judkins’ evidence.**

1. The Coroner’s recommendation has been implemented.
 - A) The implementation has been part of a continuous service improvement. This has included 2 external security audits which have been conducted since 2005.
 - B) A new security contract with increased guard hours was negotiated with Citywatch Security and concluded on 1st July 2009. This has added a further security guard on the premises during the busy day shift period.

A procedure was developed with Citywatch Security to clarify the role of the security officer in providing support to monitor psychiatric patients who exhibit behavioural disturbances (see attachment 1)

In order to better manage psychiatric patients awaiting admission in the Emergency Department, a role for a psychiatric support nurse in the Emergency Department was formally developed in September 2009. A procedure has been written to define the psychiatric support nurses role and is attached for your information (see attachment 2).

The improvements in security have not had an impact on resource allocation to other areas of health services delivery by the hospital.

2. The Coroner’s recommendation is unable to be implemented precisely as made but a similar practice has been implemented.
 - A) There is a purpose built seclusion room within the premises of the Emergency Department. However the physical location of this structure does not allow for its use as a seclusion room. This is related primarily to privacy concerns as the seclusion room is located within a public thoroughfare.

Mercy Mental Health

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- B) In order to address this deficiency, the seclusion room is used as a behavioural assessment room (BAR). This space provides a safe temporary environment for the management of Emergency Department patients including psychiatric patients that exhibit behavioural disturbances that place themselves or others at risk.

The model of care was developed for the BAR room with strict reference to practices followed at St. Vincent's Hospital Emergency Department (Attachment 3).

Recommendation 2

The Coroner supports the adoption of a statewide approach to the management of patients presenting with acute behavioural disturbance and recommends Werribee Mercy Mental Health review its current guidelines to ensure consistency with other Victorian mental health facilities

1. The Coroner's recommendation is being implemented.
- A) Mercy Mental Health supports the statewide approach to guidelines for management of acute behavioural disturbance with the recognition that these guidelines remain flexible and adaptable to the presenting clinical scenario.

The guidelines for the management of acute behavioural disturbance currently in use by Mercy Mental Health were developed with reference to the literature on acute sedation and guidelines from neighbouring area mental health services (particularly North Western Mental Health and Barwon Mental Health Service).

- C) The Mercy Mental Health Program is in the process of reviewing its guidelines for management of Acute Behavioural Disturbance. Injectable Lorazepam is now available locally. This is an agent that is used internationally for the management of acutely agitated patients. This medication will be included in the new guidelines.

It is expected that these guidelines will be completed by November 2011.

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