

5 May 2022

RESPONSE TO CORONER'S RECOMMENDATION

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Re: Leeanne Matheson - Court reference: COR 2019 1967

1. My name is Dr Alison Dwyer, Chief Medical Officer at Eastern Health. I am also the Executive Director for Research at Eastern Health. I am a fellow of the Royal Australian College of Medical Administrators. My qualifications include MBBS, MBA, MHSM, FRACMA, FCHSM, GAICD.

In response to the recommendation by the Coroner:

“Eastern Health consider implementing a policy requiring direct verbal communication between the hospital treating team and a patients authorized prescriber in instances where a patient’s opiate prescriptions have changed during their inpatient stay”.

Eastern Health accept the Coroner’s recommendation and this will be fully implemented. Eastern Health has reviewed the Coroners recommendation at our Analgesic Stewardship Committee and our Medication Management Clinical Risk Governance Committee, in consultation with our Anaesthetics Department and our Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Service. The Eastern Health guideline *3497 Opioid Management in the Acute Setting Clinical Practice Guideline* has been reviewed by the two committees, updated to reflect the recommendation and published on our Objectify policy system for all medical staff.

The recommendation was enacted in May 2022 after receiving the coroner’s recommendations. The Eastern Health Medical Professional Council will consider the implications for junior medical staff to implement these guidelines across Eastern Health, taking a risk based approach for the different specialty units and patient cohorts across the organisation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to the questions raised by the Coroner, and I hope that the Eastern Health response provides a level of detail that allows reassurance to the family and to the Coroner of the improvements that Eastern Health has undertaken to prevent a similar incident occurring in the future.

Should you have any additional queries regarding this matter, please contact myself on Alison.dwyer@easternhealth.org.au.



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