

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne  
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9 October 2023

Ms Amber Wylie  
Coroners Registrar  
Coroners Court  
Via Email: [team6@courts.vic.gov.au](mailto:team6@courts.vic.gov.au)

**Investigation into the death of Callie Griffiths-I'Anson  
Response to Coroner's Recommendations**

Dear Ms Wylie

We refer to receipt of the Coroner's Findings dated 3 July 2023 with recommendations as noted below, and provide the following response.

1. **Recognising the inherent challenges in finding a solution, I recommend that the Royal Children's Hospital considers the circumstances in which Callie died and the failure of the process for accessing advice from the on-call General Surgical Registrar about a child who had undergone a recent procedure, with a view to developing a better process.**
2. **In developing a better process, I recommend that the Royal Children's Hospital considers:**
  - a. The qualifications of the person who takes such calls in the first instance.
  - b. The use of technology to re-route calls.
  - c. Early triaging or differentiation of such calls.
  - d. The use of structured questioning to elicit as good clinical information as possible.
  - e. The particular vulnerability of children living in regional or remote areas.
  - f. The provision of a discharge summary and/or formal handover of the child to the nearest regional hospital for follow-up.

The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) acknowledges the Findings from Inquest into the death of Callie Griffiths-I'Anson (Callie) and is committed to strengthening and improving our communication systems to address the recommendations made by the Coroner.

We are in the process of reviewing our systems, including communications with parents, taking into consideration the Coroner's recommendations, and wish to advise we have made the following preliminary improvements:

- When a parent/caregiver phones the RCH switchboard in relation to a clinical matter, the Switchboard Operator will endeavour to ask the caller where the child was last treated in order to direct the call to the most appropriate Registrar. When transferring the call, the Switchboard Operator will tell the caller that if they do not receive a return call in a timely manner, they should call again, or if they are concerned they should take the child to an Emergency Department (ED) or phone an ambulance.

When a call is transferred to the Surgical Registrar and they are in theatre, a theatre staff member will now take the call on the Registrar's behalf. Since Callie's death 'Lime Green' notepads (**attached**) have been installed in theatre and contain the following information which the person taking the call will record:

- date and time of call;
- who the call is for the attention of;
- name of patient;
- patient's date of birth;
- name of caller and relationship to patient;
- contact phone number;
- content of the message;
- whether the caller is happy to receive a call at any hour of the night; and
- name of staff member taking the call.

Additionally, if the call relates to a clinical question, the staff member taking the call is prompted to remind the caller that if they have not had their call returned and they are worried about the child, they should present to RCH/nearest ED or phone an ambulance.

- Since Callie's death, the provision of information upon discharge from hospital has been improved. A Project, which included consumer representation, was undertaken across the Parkville Precinct (all 4 hospitals use a common Electronic Medical Record (EMR)) to review information provided on discharge, culminating in the 'After Visit Summary' (AVS) which is generated from the EMR.

An example of the information contained in an AVS for patients who have attended for day surgery is as follows (each AVS will be generated from the EMR for an individual patient):

**Day Surgery**

**Follow-up**

Please arrange a follow-up appointment as discussed with your surgeon.

Otherwise, an outpatient appointment notice will be posted to you in the week after your child's operation. If you are concerned or unsure about your care at home, please contact your child's surgeon.

**Contact information**

**The Royal Children's Hospital**

T: (03) 9345 5533 (24hrs)

Ask switchboard to page the on-call surgical registrar

**Surgery Centre**

Monday to Friday 7AM to 7PM

**When You Go Home**

If you require further assistance take the following steps:

- **Recovery** – If you have any questions about your general recovery, contact your local doctor.
  - **Emergency assistance** – If you require emergency assistance, call an ambulance on 000 or attend the emergency department.
  - **Further information and help** – if you require further information, please call 9345 5522 and ask for the ward listed in the "About your child's hospitalisation" section found below.
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- Wherever possible, patients who are from rural areas and are post-surgery are either admitted overnight or recommended to stay close to the hospital.  
We will continue to work on improvement projects across the organisation to strengthen information given to patients and families on admission/discharge, with a particular focus on vulnerable and rural/remote patients.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to recommendations.

We wish to convey our sincere sympathy to Callie's family.

Sincerely



A/Professor Tom Connell

Chief Medical Officer

The Royal Children's Hospital

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