

P12/672

Mr Jason Arditi
Inquiry Manager, Committee
Joint Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission
Parliament of NSW
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Arditi

**Inquiry into Health Care Complaints and Complaints
Handling in NSW - Questions Taken on Notice:-**

Attached is a response to the questions taken on notice at the above Public Hearing on 19 November 2012.

I note that the full transcript has been published on the Committee's website and incorporates appropriate corrections nominated by the witnesses.

The person to contact for further information or assistance is Anne Malcolm, Deputy Director, Strategic Relations and Communications, NSW Ministry of Health, on 9391 9729.

Yours sincerely



Dr Mary Foley
Director-General

23-1-2013



**Inquiry into Health Care Complaints and Complaints Handling in NSW – 19
November 2012.**

Questions for NSW Ministry of Health

Question 1:– The Ministry submission to the Committee stated that the NSW Health complaints management systems are currently under review. What does that review involve?

Response

The current NSW Health Complaint Management Policy Directive and associated guidelines were released in 2006, and reviewed in 2011. Responsibility for the review of complaints reported in the Incident Information Management System (IIMS) transferred from the Ministry of Health to the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) following the Director General's Governance Review.

The CEC has recently appointed a senior officer to its Patient Safety team, who will have responsibility for reviewing clinical complaints within the NSW health system and progressing review of the complaint policy and procedures within the system. This position is due to commence early 2013.

Review of the policy will examine the currency, relevancy and value of the current policy, in collaboration with Local Health Districts, the Ministry of Health and associated Pillars. The review will reflect and complement associated and scheduled NSW Health reviews relating to Open Disclosure and Incident Management within the NSW health system.

When this process is completed, a draft copy of the policy and associated procedural guidelines will be distributed to relevant health organisations for review, as part of a full statewide consultation process, before being distributed across the system.

Question 2:– Some Local Health Districts collect feedback from all patients. How many Local Health Districts collect feedback from patients?

Response

All Local Health Districts have mechanisms for patient feedback. These mechanisms include local patient satisfaction surveys. NSW Health also undertakes a Statewide Patient Survey each year that provides information on hospital performance.

Question 3: – One Hospital (possibly Moree) had in place a system of phoning all patients 24 hours after discharge to seek feedback. Is that system used in other Local Health Districts?

Response

Hunter New England Local Health District has introduced a patient contact program to follow up patients by telephone post discharge. Following evaluation by the Ministry of Health, consideration will be given to encouraging a similar program in all Local Health Districts as part of improving patient access.

Question 4: – Does NSW Health work with the Health Care Complaints Commission to provide training on complaints handling?

Response

NSW Health endorsed a program under which the Health Care Complaints Commission delivered complaint handling training to Local Health District staff. In March 2012 over two hundred complaint-handling staff from Local Health Districts attended an information and training day. With feedback from this day, the HCCC developed a targeted half-day training program, and has been visiting individual Local Health Districts to both meet with senior Executive staff and train complaint-handling staff on responding to complaints. The program began in February 2012 and the last session will conclude in March 2013. The Director General has supported the Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) to discuss opportunities with the HCCC of embedding complaint process training in orientation and other educational systems.

Question 5:- Do orientation/induction programs for staff include a session on awareness of the Health Care Complaints Commission and what it does??

Response

See response to question 4 above.

Question 6: - Do orientation/induction programs for staff include a session on local complaints handling processes?

Response

A number of the Local Health Districts include presentations on complaints processes, within their orientation programs for new staff.

Question 7: - Is information available from the Statewide Patient Survey as to what ED patients who rated their care as fair or poor complained about? What action is taken in regard to those complaints?

Response

Local Health Districts and Specialist Health networks regularly collect and monitor patient satisfaction results and implement strategies to improve patient satisfaction. In July 2012, the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) assumed management of the Patient Health Survey Program. The NSW Health Patient Survey does not provide specific data as to what ED patients, who rated their care as fair or poor, complained about. The range of patient satisfaction data that is collected and publicly reported is expected to expand following this transfer. Over the next two years the BHI will undertake research and testing to improve the Patient Survey program, including how to collect more reliable patient experience data from hospitals with smaller numbers of patients.

To improve the transfer of patients from ED to the wards, Local Health Districts are implementing new models of care in EDs that ensure patients receive care in the most appropriate place for their clinical condition. This includes using models of care where care can be provided outside of the emergency department, for example, using the Medical Assessment Units and Hospital in Home services. NSW Health is also implementing the Patient Flow System across acute facilities in NSW – a whole of hospital approach to planning, and managing capacity and demand across the hospital and acute community setting.