

Submission

No 17

INQUIRY INTO THE OPERATION OF THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS ACT 1993

Organisation: Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service
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Position: Acting Chief Executive
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Date Received: 3/12/2008

The Committee Manager
Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
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Dear Mr Keenan

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 November 2008 inviting Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service (NSCCAHS) to make a submission to the Inquiry into the "Operation of the Health Care Complaints Act 1993."

The NSCCAHS provides care for over 1.1 million people – more than 16% of the population of NSW. Covering an area of over 2,500 square kilometres, it traverses high-density inner city living, through well-established inner and newer outer metropolitan areas, to semi-rural locales; and spans 13 Local Government Areas.

NSCCAHS is divided into four health services with seven acute hospitals. There are 32 public health facilities, including 11 public hospitals and 21 community health centres.

Gosford and Royal North Shore Hospitals, as the major centres in the Area, are networked with, and provide support to the local hospitals of Wyong, Hornsby, Manly, Mona Vale and Ryde.

As well as seven acute hospitals, the Area operates a psychiatric facility (Macquarie Hospital), two subacute hospitals (Long Jetty and Woy Woy), and over 100 community health services. Three facilities are operated by affiliated health organisations: the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney (RRCS) at Ryde; and two facilities operated by Hope Healthcare – Greenwich Hospital and Neringah Hospital at Wahroonga.

An estimated 1,400 general practitioners, 38 private hospitals, 160 nursing homes and 53 non-government organisations also provide health services within the area.

The Terms of Reference were widely circulated to various stakeholders within NSCCAHS. The following comments were received, and are now submitted to the Inquiry for its consideration:

- The Health Care Complaints Commission system has improved tremendously overall, with staff from both Services working together to improve the health system within NSW
- The information sharing has also improved significantly, with systems in place so that questions raised by the HCCC can be answered quickly, ie, requests and responses are now being emailed resulting in a quicker turn-around time.

- It has been suggested that employers be confidentially notified when employed staff, eg, RMOs, RNs, are approached for a statement by the Commission. This is helpful for governance, for risk management, and for support of the staff member

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Mary Dowling, Manager, Professional Practice Unit on telephone (02) 9926 8438.

Yours sincerely



Wendy Hughes

j Acting Chief Executive

Date: 21/12/08