

Submission

No 7

INQUIRY INTO THE ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL

Organisation:

Name: Mrs Kaye Preema

Telephone:

Date Received: 31/10/2007

Theme:

Summary

Rev Fred Nile
NSW State Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney 2000

REFERENCE: ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL

Dear Rev Nile

It is very gratifying to finally have an investigation into Royal North Shore Hospital. I wanted to complain but I thought I would be wasting my breath complaining as no-one seemed to care. If I had known an investigation would happen I would have taken notes as so many issues were of great concern.

The Patient: Mrs Janet Isabella Lancaster
DOB: 2 June 1920
Address: original Fingal Bay / then Lithgow/ Hunters Hill
Date as patient: 2006
Medical Fund: Manchester Unity
Date of death: 8th December 2006
Complainant: Mrs Kaye Preema
Relationship: Daughter
Address:
Mobile:

My mother was admitted to Lithgow Hospital then transferred to Royal North Shore Hospital. As I was employed at Lithgow I could not attend for daily visits as I had in Lithgow. I would visit through the week and every weekend. My brother Ian Lancaster was overseas on many occasions so his supervision of her was limited. He had also not spent much time with my mother due to his travelling and work commitment so he didn't have a close relationship with her.

My mother was treated in a deplorable way as she was moved to various wards even being in the burns unit for a time. When I tried to get information from a nurses station there could be 5 or 6 people there and I would be totally ignored until I had to demand to have someone attend to me. I would stand there like an idiot. I would be finally told a doctor would come and speak to me but on the majority of occasions no-one came.

I was careful what I said as being so far away I was worried she may have suffered if I complained about her care. Country hospitals are so different to city hospitals. Lithgow Private Hospital staff were so caring and attentive to carers and patients but being at Royal North Shore was so different and uncaring.

On so many occasions I would find my mother in a delirious state which was due to her being dehydrated. After giving her lots of glasses of water over the day she would be back to her old self the next day. On several occasions my husband would demand that they gave her intravenous fluid. This also had remarkable affect. I had been totally unaware that my mother had been diagnosed as having dementia. I believe this would have happened when she was in one of her dehydrated states.

*Acknowledged
31/10/07.
Judy*

Since my father died in 1999 my mother lived independently at Fingal Haven Retirement Village Farm Rd Fingal Bay 2315. She drove her car and was involved in several community Groups. She had been in hospital several times in the period to 2006 due to knee replacement, heart stents, cataracts surgery and I was responsible for her after care on each occasion. I would go and visit her every 4-5 weeks at her home. Her sister is 93 and still has excellent mental ability. There were no signs of dementia and I was never asked about her mental state. I had her power of attorney. I was never told she had been diagnosed with dementia. I believe that that diagnosis was the deciding factor that my mother was no longer a viable patient.

I personally witnessed the so called dementia test being given to a non english speaking patient who was very ill. It was scary to see that this one person could ask someone ill a few basic questions on day date etc and this would then label that person with dementia.

No-one supervised the food or water intake of my mother. She lost a terrible amount of weight. No-one cared.

She was moved from ward to ward and we were never sure where she would be – I can't remember now all the places she was moved to. Confusing to anyone well let alone someone ill. She was worried we would never find her again! Several of her personal items were lost on one of her moves. A plastic bag of belongings had dirty items included with clean items together.

Then on one occasion I was told she is being moved to Greenwich Rehabilitation Hospital. She was moved by wheelchair to the Transit area. We sat there for several hours, no food or drink being offered, then finally we went to Greenwich. We got there and was told she would have to go back as she should not be there. As I got upset as this was the final straw with her poor treatment they agreed to keep her. She only stayed a matter of days and she was back to Royal North Shore.

I was responsible for showering her on many occasions. She hadn't had her hair washed since she had been admitted. I thought if I had her classified as a private patient her care may have improved but they took the private fund money but the care was just as bad.

My two sons visited her nearly every day in the late evenings after their work and would report to me their concerns or her latest location.

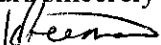
She received very little occupational physical therapy. I would take her a for a walk and get her moving but the staff would take a no from my mum as "good we will go and have a break". A lot of time due to her dehydrated state she was incapable of going for a walk!

It was most difficult for me living in the country as I couldn't get answers to what was happening to my mother and she seemed to be deteriorating.

She was released to a retirement Village at Hunter's Hill but was only there a matter of days and she was back to Royal North Shore. They released her on 4th December to St Ann's Nursing Home and she was in a bad state, dehydrated, bad infection and she finally died on the 8th December.

Royal North Shore is in a shocking state with respect to administration, medical staff's communication. You have my permission to see my mother's medical file and check on details but the neglect part will not be mentioned unfortunately. You can contact me on my mobile 0421071996.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Kaye Preema