

**INQUIRY INTO OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF
THE NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 27 July 2019

Partially
Confidential

To Whom it May Concern,

I am not sure what a submission entails, but I have been jotting down some of my experiences with the new hospital since my first visit last November. I am happy to talk to someone but do not have much time as I am still involved in my mother's care and am also my husband's carer. Sorry they are just brief jottings but wasn't planning on doing anything with them.

November 17th, 2018- went by ambulance to the hospital and after hours spent in emergency it was decided to admit my mum who is 93 years old. She is physically frail but quite competent unless she is unwell then she gets disoriented. Our experience whilst we were there was quite difficult as so many things in short supply (Dr in emergency couldn't even find paper towel to wipe gel off mum and had to run to the toilet). They could not access any of her records, so I had to go home and get what I had. My mother is on a lot of medications and after two days without them I asked could I bring them in and was told no that people can go without their meds for a few days. Some of the drugs my mum is on like Warfarin and her pain patch I was led to believe previously are dangerous to come off cold turkey. My mum is very hard of hearing and unless I was there they didn't attempt to make sure she could hear or understand them. She was very confused as Drs and a lot of the staff talked quietly and had strong accents. Her patient board was never written up and they only had a walker and a wheelchair to share between many patients. Again, I offered to bring in hers and was told no they would only get taken. The patient my mum was sharing a room with died suddenly and they raced mum out of the room. I was with her when they decided to take her back to her room. When we got there the orderlies were still cleaning the other side of the room and had dumped trays, trolleys etc all on mum's side of the room which were still there. When they finally took it all away some of my mothers' belongings had gone including a library book and she was quite upset about this.

Thursday 24th January 2019- My mum had a fall about 10.30am at her home and an ambulance was called who decided she needed to go to hospital. Mum arrived at Northern Beaches Hospital around 11.30 and I was there to meet her. During the course of the afternoon she was examined, taken for x-rays and then later a CT Scan. I was told about 4.30pm they thought Mum was only badly bruised and maybe she would go home. Mum was then asked whether she was public or private after I queried sending her home as she lived on her own and was told we will see. Soon after a Dr raced in and told me she wasn't going home as she had broken her hip. Two junior Drs were told to give her a pain block after setting up and mulling over correct procedure for more than 20 mins (I timed it) one of them got another Dr to oversee procedure. They told me I could go home as they felt she was competent to talk to a surgeon later that night and sign papers. I refused and was there to explain what

was happening to her as she couldn't hear surgeon and was tired and confused. I got home at 8.30 pm was rung at 9.30pm by a junior Dr asking me to go to my mother's house to find out my mother's pacemaker number. I said I would go in the morning and agreed to go up early to the hospital to bring medical information about my mother for them as they still couldn't access it from other hospitals.

Friday 25th January – Was there for about six hours from about 8am and talked to a number of medical professionals about my mother's many medical issues. Drs asked many questions were glad I had brought medical information of hospital stays etc. Operation postponed a few times.

Saturday 26th January- rung by anaesthetist twice before mum went in for operation. The first time telling me he didn't really feel mum should be having this operation as she was probably not going to make it through the operation. He also informed me that there were no ICU beds available or staff. In the second phone call he informed me that she had to have the operation even though it was very risky and that she was going in soon. They would only ring me if she had died so no news is good news and if she makes it through ring later that afternoon to see how she was. A few hours later I got a phone call so was expecting the worst but it was a surgeon to tell me she was now in ICU and had made it through.

Visited ICU for an hour that afternoon.

Sunday 27th – The next day I had a phone call from nurse (said she was mum's nurse) abusing me as old people need their family and couldn't I spare some time from my busy life to come and visit my mother. I explained that I had been there for hours every day she had been admitted and that I was planning on coming in soon. She was very rude and even left messages on our answering machine. When I mentioned this at the desk in ICU they just shook their head and laughed.

Monday – Mum in ICU

Tuesday – up to ward back down to ICU

Wednesday after lunch up to ward 5C then moved to Ward 5B moved beds twice in ward 5B taken to x ray twice as they 'forgot' she had already been– mum was very upset as she was in a lot of pain and they only realised their mistake after trying to position her to take x-rays

Thursday after lunch moved her again back to 5C. I arrived to see her and asked nurse in ward 5B where she was and told she was moved thirty minutes before to ward 5C. I walked to ward 5C and asked which bed my mum was now in and was told mum was on her way. When I informed them, she

had been supposedly moved there a while ago they spent another thirty minutes finding her. They could not tell me where she had been only that she was now in the lift???? I was there to help her eat her dinner as she was in so much pain and couldn't lift her arms she was given the wrong food tray which I didn't check and then the orderly brought hers and abused me for opening the other one and just left both trays there.

Friday – finally talked to good Dr better day still no name or details on patient board

Saturday – moved beds again, lost her food tray, the name on patient board not hers was like that for more than a day until I pointed it out and nurse shrugged and told me it didn't matter.

My Mum went to Mona Vale Rehab after the hospital and despite mum and I repeatedly telling the hospital when she was there that she couldn't lift her arm and was in pain as well as the hip it was only when she got to rehab she had tests to find out why. She had a torn rotator cuff which was causing all the pain etc.

Over the next few months mum was taken to Emergency at the hospital a few times, but they were not for long. Also had a visit to North Shore with suspected heart issues and wow what a different experience the whole time she was there! It was very professional and supportive.

Monday 8th July mum sent to NBH again by ambulance from a respite setting. She was admitted and was there for two weeks. Not as bad as previously but still issues. Despite other members of the family and I asking every day to be updated by a Doctor it took over a week and the intervention of the social worker to get a phone call from a Doctor to tell me how she was. Very soon after that they found a serious issue which required a family meeting the next day. I then had to find a more supportive setting for mum to go to before she could be discharged. I let the social worker and the hospital know on Thursday 18th July that the following Monday the 22nd I would find out if a room was available at War Veterans and if so, she could move there from the 25th July. Mum was moved rooms again on Saturday 20th. On Monday the 22nd I rang War Veterans and lady there said luckily, we have a place as hospital just rang and she has been discharged and coming by ambulance to the facility. I got to the War Veterans soon after mum arrived to find her in a distressed state as she hadn't been informed at the hospital of what was happening and didn't know if I knew. I rang hospital to ask why they hadn't called me and why they had discharged her.

They couldn't answer either question.

A few days before Christmas my husband went to Emergency about 12 pm at the Northern Beaches hospital. He had been bleeding quite profusely from the penis for a few hours. He went into Emergency and after initial observations we didn't see anyone for hours. He was then sent to short stay about 5am and a Junior Dr saw him. We did let this DR know that had a lot of issues and we knew the main specialist overseeing these was on call and visited this hospital. Could he please ring her? I was told he would consult with main DR when she did her rounds a bit later in the morning. At 6am the nurse said she did not have a lot of his medications including his insulin, so I was sent home to get them. I just grabbed everything I could find at home and came back only to have the nurse come over and say how dare I bring into the hospital a restricted drug (Prednisone). I didn't know this so just took it back and put it in my bag. She then came over quite irate as I had missed picking up a part of his insulin syringe and she would have to syphon it into another syringe. Finally, the Dr came around on her rounds and again I asked if they could ring his specialist (she said she was the Dr and made those decisions). She informed us was being admitted and at the very least would be seeing a urologist. I decided to go home to sleep but before I got to the car park I was rung and told to come back and get my husband as they had decided to discharge him???? We later saw his specialist after Christmas who was not pleased at all with the hospital and immediately sent him for an iron infusion and also to a urologist. He was operated on at another hospital to rectify his problem as the urologist we saw would no way operate at that hospital.

I hope these brief anecdotal jottings help.