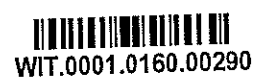


SDLO - Fwd: Response to Parliamentary Questions

From: SDLO
To: Leisa Schultz
Date: 22/03/2005 5:18 PM
Subject: Fwd: Response to Parliamentary Questions

Paul Dall'Alba
Senior Departmental Liaison Officer
Queensland Health



SDLO - Response to Parliamentary Questions

From: Gerry FitzGerald
To: SDLO@health.qld.gov.au
Date: 22/03/2005 1:25 PM
Subject: Response to Parliamentary Questions

Paul

Please find attached response to parliamentary questions.

Dr Gerry FitzGerald
Chief Health Officer
Queensland Health
Phone: 323 41137
Fax: 3221 7535
Email: Gerry.FitzGerald@health.qld.gov.au


WIT.0001.0160.00291

28/09/2005

Surgical Services at Bundaberg Hospital

Suggested response

Background

- The Chief Health Officer was asked to investigate concerns raised by staff at Bundaberg Hospital in regard to clinical outcomes in the surgical unit. The report of the review is not complete and has not yet been provided to the Senior Executive Director-Health Services. The Chief Health Officer is awaiting some peer group hospital benchmarking data in order to compare outcomes.
- Dr Patel is a graduate of the Saurashtra University, India, and has spent almost 20 years as a practising surgeon in the USA. He was appointed as an 'area of need' doctor at Bundaberg Hospital in April 2003 and is currently the Director of Surgery at Bundaberg.
- Concerns have been raised, particularly by nursing staff, in regard to Dr Patel. The allegations are that he has significantly increased rates of adverse outcomes, tends to take on or retain cases that are beyond the capacity of the Bundaberg Hospital and is argumentative and dismissive of some staff members, particularly nursing staff.
- However, it is worth noting that Dr Patel is also very industrious and has significantly reduced elective surgery waiting times. He is very active in teaching of junior medical staff and is well regarded by his medical colleagues. There have been no significant complaints from patients or their relatives.

The CHO has met with members of the staff at Bundaberg Hospital and collected data on patient outcomes. When the report is finalised it will be provided to the zonal and district managers through the Senior Executive Director-Health Services.

- The key findings to date are:
 - Procedures have been performed at Bundaberg which are beyond the capacity and facilities of the Bundaberg Hospital. The hospital executive, in collaboration with clinicians, should define service levels for the hospital using the Queensland Health Service Capability Framework which outlines the minimum support services, staffing, safety standards and other requirements to facilitate the delivery of safe and appropriately supported clinical services. The Medical Superintendent has taken action to limit the scope of surgery performed by this surgeon and to ensure that critically ill patients are appropriately referred to higher level hospitals.
 - Concerns were raised regarding the rates of wound dehiscence (break down). The data have shown that this rate is reducing.
 - Concerns were also raised regarding the rate of unplanned re-admissions. This rate also appears to be reducing.
 - With regard to other complications, these concerns relate particularly to the more complex procedures. Benchmarking data suggest that, for



one complication, Bundaberg Hospital appears to have a higher rate than other similar hospitals, however, this has not been tested for statistical significance.

- There is significant conflict within the workplace which requires attention by the hospital administration and behavioural management strategies put in place.
- The significant issue regarding the competency of Dr Patel appears to relate to his preparedness to take on cases which are beyond the capacity of the Bundaberg Hospital and possibly beyond his personal capacity. There is no evidence that his general surgical skills are inappropriate or incompetent.
- However, the fact that he has taken on those cases may reflect significantly poor judgement to a level which may be grounds for disciplinary action by the Medical Board. Thus, the CHO has recommended that this matter be referred to the Medical Board for attention.
- I have prepared some suggested response points as below. I have also enclosed a draft of the report.

Suggested Response:

- I have now been informed of concerns raised by staff at the Bundaberg Hospital in regard to some general surgical services provided at the hospital.
- The Chief Health Officer, Dr Gerry FitzGerald, has undertaken a review of clinical outcomes at the hospital and is currently finalising his report.
- Dr FitzGerald has identified a number of issues of concern at the hospital and will be making recommendations in regard to those concerns.
- There is insufficient evidence at this time to take any particular action against any individual, and to suspend anyone would be unjust and inappropriate.
- The Bundaberg Hospital has taken certain action to limit the scope of some general surgery performed at the hospital which should address the majority of issues raised by staff. The report will also make recommendations regarding the management of staff conflict at the hospital.
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- However, Dr FitzGerald has raised concerns about the clinical judgement exercised by one member of staff and will be referring these



concerns to the Medical Board for consideration

Mail Envelope Properties (423FC6E1.E46 : 8 : 47584)

Subject: Fwd: Response to Parliamentary Questions
Creation Date: 22/03/2005 5:18:57 pm
From: SDLO

Created By: SDLO@health.qld.gov.au

Recipients	Action	Date & Time
health.qld.gov.au		
Corporate-Office-PO3.CORPOR	Delivered	22/03/2005
5:19:06 pm		
Leisa Schultz (Leisa Schultz)	Opened	22/03/2005
8:05:03 pm		
	Deleted	22/03/2005
8:05:22 pm		
	Emptied	23/03/2005
8:26:05 pm		
	Fwd: Response to Parliamentary Questions	

Post Office	Delivered	Route
Corporate-Office-PO3.CORPORATE-OFFICE	22/03/2005 5:19:06 pm	health.qld.gov.au

Files	Size	Date & Time
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TEXT.htm	484	
Mail		

Options

Auto Delete: No
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Notify Recipients: Yes
Priority: Standard
Reply Requested: No
Return Notification: None

Concealed Subject: No
Security: Standard

To Be Delivered: Immediate
Status Tracking: All Information



LW - 13A

From: SDLO
To: Gerry FitzGerald
Date: 22/03/2005 10:53:01 am
Subject: Question in Parliament

Gerry

As discussed, Minister had a question in Parliament this morning, from the member for Cunningham (Mr Copeland), about an investigation being conducted into a Dr Patel at Bundaberg Hospital.

Mr Copeland stated that you are investigating post-operative complications and asked if the Minister would release the report and suspend Dr Patel.

Can you please provide some dot points by return e-mail to allow the D-G to verbally brief the Minister this afternoon.

We may then need to organise a Parliamentary Question-time brief for tomorrow so the Minister can respond to the question in Parliament.

Regards

Paul

Paul Dall'Alba
Senior Departmental Liaison Officer
Queensland Health

From: SDLO
To: Gerry FitzGerald
Date: 22/03/2005 11:26:17 am
Subject: Bundaberg

Gerry

Can you please also include whether the issues with Dr Patel were raised by staff at Bundaberg and if any sentinel events resulted from any of the events?

Thanks

Paul

Paul Dall'Alba
Senior Departmental Liaison Officer
Queensland Health



From: Gerry FitzGerald
To: Susan Jenkins
Date: 22/03/2005 11:38:58 am
Subject: Fwd: Question in Parliament

From: SDLO
To: Gerry FitzGerald
Date: 22/03/2005 10:53:01 am
Subject: Question in Parliament

Gerry

As discussed, Minister had a question in Parliament this morning, from the member for Cunningham (Mr Copeland), about an investigation being conducted into a Dr Patel at Bundaberg Hospital.

Mr Copeland stated that you are investigating post-operative complications and asked if the Minister would release the report and suspend Dr Patel.

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We may then need to organise a Parliamentary Question-time brief for tomorrow so the Minister can respond to the question in Parliament.

Regards

Paul

Paul Dall'Alba
Senior Departmental Liaison Officer
Queensland Health

From: Gerry FitzGerald
To: Susan Jenkins
Date: 22/03/2005 11:40:26 am
Subject: Sue

Sue

Attached is a draft resposne to the quastion in parliament

Gerry

Surgical Services at Bundaberg

Suggested response

Background

- The Chief health officer was asked to investigate concerns raised by staff at Bundaberg in regard to clinical outcomes in the surgical unit. This report is almost complete but has not been released as yet. The report is awaiting some benchmarking data from like hospitals to compare outcomes with.
- Dr Patel is an Indian graduate who has spent almost 20 years practising surgery in the USA. He was appointed as an area of need doctor at Bundaberg Hospital about two years ago and is currently the Director of Surgery at Bundaberg.
- Concerns have been raised particularly by nursing staff in regard to Dr Patel. The allegations are that he has significantly increased rate of adverse outcomes, tends to take on or retain cases that are beyond the capacity of the Bundaberg Hospital and is argumentative and dismissive of some staff particularly nursing staff.
- However it is worth noting that Dr Patel is also very industrious and has significantly reduced waiting times. He is very active in teaching of junior medical staff and is well regarded by his medical colleagues. There have been no significant complaints from patients or their relatives.
- The CHO has met with members of the staff at Bundaberg and collated data on patient outcomes and am currently finalising a report which will be sent to the hospital administration as soon as it is complete.
- The key findings are:
 - Procedures have been performed at Bundaberg which are beyond the capacity and facilities of the Bundaberg Hospital. The Hospital needs to define the scope of practice and align that scope with the hospital's capacity. The Hospital has taken action to limit the scope fo surgery performed and to ensure that critically ill patiетns are referred to other hospitals.
 - There are concerns regarding the rate of infection and other complications. These concerns relate particularly to the more complex operations. Benchmarking data suggests that Bundaberg Hospital does not have a significantly higher rate of complications that other similar hospitals.
 - There is significant conflict within the workplace which requires attention by the hospital administration and behavioural management strategies put in place.



- The significant issue regarding the competency of Dr Patel appears to relate to his preparedness to take on cases which are beyond the capacity of the Bundaberg Hospital and possibly beyond his personal capacity. There is no evidence that his general surgical skills are inappropriate or incompetent.
- However the fact that he has taken on those cases may reflect significantly poor judgement to a level which may be grounds for disciplinary action by the Medical Board. Thus the CHO has recommended that this matter be referred to the Medical Board for their attention.
- I have prepared some suggested response points as below. I have also enclosed a draft of the Report..

Suggested Response:

- I have now been informed of concern raised by staff at the Bundaberg Hospital in regard to the surgical services provided at the Hospital.
- The Chief Health Officer Dr Gerry FitzGerald has undertaken a review of clinical outcomes at the hospital and is currently finalising his report.
- Dr FitzGerald has identified a number of issues of concern at the Hospital and will be making recommendations in regard to those concerns.
- There is insufficient evidence at this time to take any particularly action against any individual and to suspend anyone would be unjust and inappropriate.
- The Bundaberg Hospital has taken certain action to limit the scope of surgery performed at the Hospital which should address the majority of issues raised by staff. The report will also make recommendations regarding the management of staff conflict at the hospital.
- However the report has also identified that there is a relatively high satisfaction amongst patients and that waiting times for surgery have been reduced considerably in recent times. Junior staff have been very complementary in regard to teaching and guidance provided to them.
- However Dr FitzGerald has raised concern about the clinical judgement exercised by one member of staff and will be referring these concerns to the Medical Board for their consideration.



SDLO - Verbal briefing for Minister

From: SDLO
To: Gerry FitzGerald
Date: 22/03/2005 12:55 PM
Subject: Verbal briefing for Minister

Gerry

Minister has requested a verbal briefing about the issues raised in Parliament this morning.

Can you be available for the Minister at 6:00pm tonight at Parliament House Room A 37.

Glenda Viner will meet you at Main entrance to Parliament House.

Please call me if problems - 41570.

Thanks

Paul

Paul Dall'Alba
Senior Departmental Liaison Officer
Queensland Health


WIT.0001.0160.00303

28/09/2005

SDLO - Hansard

From: SDLO
To: PMSU
Date: 22/03/2005 1:09 PM
Subject: Hansard

Dave


Can you arrange for Hansard question time and member for Burnett's statements immediately afterward to be forwarded to the following people as soon as possible:

- Leisa Schultz
- Phil Nickerson
- Peter Leck

Thanks

Paul

Paul Dall'Alba
Senior Departmental Liaison Officer
Queensland Health


WIT.0001.0160.00304

22/03/2005

From: Gerry FitzGerald
To: Paul Dall'Alba
Date: 22/03/2005 1:10:18 pm
Subject: Response to Parliamentary Questions

Dr Gerry FitzGerald
Chief Health Officer
Queensland Health
Phone: 323 41137
Fax: 3221 7535
Email: Gerry_FitzGerald@health.qld.gov.au

Surgical Services at Bundaberg Hospital**Suggested response****Background**

- The Chief Health Officer was asked to investigate concerns raised by staff at Bundaberg Hospital in regard to clinical outcomes in the surgical unit. The report of the review is not complete and has not yet been provided to the Senior Executive Director-Health Services. The Chief Health Officer is awaiting some peer group hospital benchmarking data in order to compare outcomes.
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- However, it is worth noting that Dr Patel is also very industrious and has significantly reduced elective surgery waiting times. He is very active in teaching of junior medical staff and is well regarded by his medical colleagues. There have been no significant complaints from patients or their relatives.

The CHO has met with members of the staff at Bundaberg Hospital and collected data on patient outcomes. When the report is finalised it will be provided to the zonal and district managers through the Senior Executive Director-Health Services.

- The key findings to date are:
 - Procedures have been performed at Bundaberg which are beyond the capacity and facilities of the Bundaberg Hospital. The hospital executive, in collaboration with clinicians, should define service levels for the hospital using the Queensland Health Service Capability Framework which outlines the minimum support services, staffing, safety standards and other requirements to facilitate the delivery of safe and appropriately supported clinical services. The Medical Superintendent has taken action to limit the scope of surgery performed by this surgeon and to ensure that critically ill patients are appropriately referred to higher level hospitals.
 - Concerns were raised regarding the rates of wound dehiscence (break down). The data have shown that this rate is reducing.
 - Concerns were also raised regarding the rate of unplanned re-admissions. This rate also appears to be reducing.
 - With regard to other complications, these concerns relate particularly to the more complex procedures. Benchmarking data suggest that, for



one complication, Bundaberg Hospital appears to have a higher rate than other similar hospitals, however, this has not been tested for statistical significance.

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- However, the fact that he has taken on those cases may reflect significantly poor judgement to a level which may be grounds for disciplinary action by the Medical Board. Thus, the CHO has recommended that this matter be referred to the Medical Board for attention.
- I have prepared some suggested response points as below. I have also enclosed a draft of the report.

Suggested Response:

- I have now been informed of concerns raised by staff at the Bundaberg Hospital in regard to some general surgical services provided at the hospital.
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concerns to the Medical Board for consideration



Mail Envelope Properties (423F8C9A.F03 : 13 : 62571)

Subject: Response to Parliamentary Questions
Creation Date: 22/03/2005 1:10:18 pm
From: Gerry FitzGerald

Created By: Gerry FitzGerald@health.qld.gov.au

Recipients	Action	Date & Time
health.qld.gov.au		
Corporate-Office-PO2.CORPOR	Delivered	22/03/2005
1:10:27 pm		
Paul Dall'alba (Paul Dall'Alba)	Replied	22/03/2005
1:10:27 pm		
	Opened	22/03/2005
1:10:31 pm		
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1:50:14 am		
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2:01:21 am		

Response to Parliamentary
Questions

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Files	Size	Date & Time
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TEXT.htm	602	
Responsetoparliamentaryquestions.DOC	40448	23/03/2005
9:02:42 am		

Options

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Expiration Date: None
Notify Recipients: Yes
Priority: Standard
Reply Requested: No
Return Notification: None

Concealed Subject: No
Security: Standard

To Be Delivered: Immediate
Status Tracking: All Information

SDLO - Parliamentary question / statement

From: SDLO
To: Leisa Schultz
Date: 22/03/2005 1:11 PM
Subject: Parliamentary question / statement
CC: Paul Michaels; Peter Leck; Phil Nickerson

Leisa

This morning in Parliament, the member for Cunningham asked a question of the Minister about a doctor Patel in Bundaberg and asked if the Minister would have the doctor suspended - the implication being that he is incompetent. The member for Burnett then made a statement after question time and made further negative comments about the doctor.

I have asked PMSU to send copies of Hansard to you as soon as it is available.

Due to the nature of the statements made, it is likely that media attention will result.

CHO has provided some information to D-G and will verbally brief Minister tonight.

D-G has advised that Q Health response should be along the following lines:

- District Manager has sought assistance in evaluating the appropriateness of surgical services at Bundaberg.
- This review is underway and Queensland Health will consider recommendations when complete.

Regards

Paul

Paul Dall'Alba
Senior Departmental Liaison Officer
Queensland Health


WIT.0001.0160.00310

Surgical Services at Bundaberg Hospital

Suggested response

Background

- The Chief Health Officer was asked to investigate concerns raised by staff at Bundaberg Hospital in regard to clinical outcomes in the surgical unit. The report of the review is not complete and has not yet been provided to the Senior Executive Director-Health Services. The Chief Health Officer is awaiting some peer group hospital benchmarking data in order to compare outcomes.
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The CHO has met with members of the staff at Bundaberg Hospital and collected data on patient outcomes. When the report is finalised it will be provided to the zonal and district managers through the Senior Executive Director-Health Services.

- The key findings to date are:
 - Procedures have been performed at Bundaberg which are beyond the capacity and facilities of the Bundaberg Hospital. The hospital executive, in collaboration with clinicians, should define service levels for the hospital using the Queensland Health Service Capability Framework which outlines the minimum support services, staffing, safety standards and other requirements to facilitate the delivery of safe and appropriately supported clinical services. The Medical Superintendent has taken action to limit the scope of surgery performed by this surgeon and to ensure that critically ill patients are appropriately referred to higher level hospitals.
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TEXT.htm 1676
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9:02:42 am

Options

Auto Delete: No
Expiration Date: None
Notify Recipients: Yes
Priority: High
Reply Requested: No
Return Notification: None

Concealed Subject: No
Security: Standard

To Be Delivered: Immediate
Status Tracking: All Information

SDLO - Response to Parliamentary Questions

From: Gerry FitzGerald
To: SDLO@health.qld.gov.au
Date: 22/03/2005 1:25 PM
Subject: Response to Parliamentary Questions

Paul

Please find attached response to parliamentary questions.

Dr Gerry FitzGerald
Chief Health Officer
Queensland Health
Phone: 323 41137
Fax: 3221 7535
Email: Gerry_FitzGerald@health.qld.gov.au


WIT.0001.0160.00316

Surgical Services at Bundaberg Hospital

Suggested response

Background

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Mail Envelope Properties (423F9035.2CA : 13 : 62571)

Subject: Response to Parliamentary Questions
Creation Date: 22/03/2005 1:25:41 pm
From: Gerry FitzGerald

Created By: Gerry FitzGerald@health.qld.gov.au

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health.qld.gov.au		
Corporate-Office-PO1.CORPOR	Delivered	22/03/2005
1:25:41 pm		
SDLO (SDLO@health.qld.gov.au)	Opened	22/03/2005
3:32:08 pm		
	Deleted	21/06/2005
1:31:09 am		
	Emptied	28/06/2005
1:54:13 am		

Response to Parliamentary
Questions

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9:02:42 am		

Options

Auto Delete: No
Expiration Date: None
Notify Recipients: Yes
Priority: Standard
Reply Requested: No
Return Notification: None

Concealed Subject: No
Security: Standard

To Be Delivered: Immediate
Status Tracking: All Information

SDLO - Fwd: AMAQ ministerial

From: SDLO
To: Steve Buckland
Date: 22/03/2005 5:33 PM
Subject: Fwd: AMAQ ministerial

Steve

Draft MInisterial statement about AMAQ from Leisa.

Draft Statement about Bundaberg from Dave.

Will talk to you about these.

Regards

Paul

Paul Dall'Alba
Senior Departmental Liaison Officer
Queensland Health


WIT.0001.0160.00321

The report is not yet complete and as such has not been released.

When the report is completed appropriate action, if deemed necessary, will be taken.

Until that time, I would repeat that it is totally irresponsible and inappropriate for any allegations to be made in parliament regarding this matter.

Mail Envelope Properties (423FCA3E.F6C : 8 : 47584)

Subject: Fwd: AMAQ ministerial
Creation Date: 22/03/2005 5:33:18 pm
From: SDLO

Created By: SDLO@health.qld.gov.au

Recipients	Action	Date & Time
health.qld.gov.au		
Corporate-Office-PO1.CORPOR	Delivered	22/03/2005
5:33:19 pm		
Steve Buckland (Steve Buckland)	Forwarded	22/03/2005
5:33:19 pm		
6:44:43 pm	Opened	22/03/2005

Post Office	Delivered	Route
Corporate-Office-PO1.CORPORATE-OFFICE	22/03/2005 5:33:19 pm	health.qld.gov.au

Files	Size	Date & Time
MESSAGE	1237	22/03/2005 5:33:18 pm
TEXT.htm	832	
Mail		
March 23 bberg surgeon_1.doc	35328	22/03/2005 5:32:49 pm

Options

Auto Delete: No
Expiration Date: None
Notify Recipients: Yes
Priority: Standard
Reply Requested: No
Return Notification: None

Concealed Subject: No
Security: Standard

To Be Delivered: Immediate
Status Tracking: All Information