

11 October 2019

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**Re: Official Information Act request – Coronial Recommendations**

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 27 September 2019 requesting the following information.

I'm working on a story about Hans Dalton, a psychiatric patient who died in a Samoan Prison on Boxing Day 2012. At the end of July this year Coroner Peter Ryan released his findings into Mr Dalton's death and in these findings made a number of recommendations that the ADHB should consider developing a protocol for its Mental Health Services for when a client of the Service is about to travel to another country.

**1. Has ADHB's Chief Executive Officer and Chief Medical Officer read Coroner Peter Ryan's findings into Hans Dalton's death?**

Yes, both the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Medical Officer have read the Coroner's findings into Mr Dalton's death.

**2. Has ADHB developed a protocol covering the actions by ADHB Mental Health Services when a client of the service is about to travel to another country?**

Auckland DHB has not developed a protocol covering when a client of the service is about to travel to another country as we do not believe such a protocol is appropriate.

The Coroner has outlined three issues which should be covered by such a protocol:

1. The circumstances in which Auckland DHB should provide the client and/or family with a letter outlining in brief the client's mental health history and current treatment regime;
2. The circumstances in which the Auckland DHB should communicate with the mental health service in the country to which a client of the Auckland DHB is about to travel;
3. Discussion with the client and/or family about the mental health service of the country to which the client is travelling.

With regard to the first point, it is our practice to offer letters of introduction to clients who are to travel overseas, should such a letter be potentially required while a client is in another country. However, with regard to the second point above, we believe that it is a breach of a client's privacy rights to contact a foreign mental health service when their intervention may not be necessary. Further, it would be difficult to know where to send information so that it could be of benefit, and doing so would require a foreign mental health service to have a process for receiving and dealing with such information.

We also note that given current methods of communication, there is an easy ability to transfer full information to another mental health service should the need arise. As such, we do not believe that client welfare is compromised in the absence of such communication ahead of it becoming necessary.

With regard to the Coroner's third point, we are of the opinion that this is better dealt with through discussions with the client/family about the risk of relapse; the risks of travelling overseas; to encourage adherence to medication; and if clinically indicated to provide advice not to travel.

Further, in order to provide meaningful advice about a foreign mental health service, extensive research would be required. For the reasons outlined above, Auckland DHB is of the opinion that a formal policy is not required.

**3. Has ADHB made any changes to its services in light of Coroner Ryan's recommendations, made pursuant to section 57A of the Coroners Act 2006.**

No.

I trust this information answers your questions.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Auckland DHB website.

Yours faithfully



Ailsa Claire, OBE  
Chief Executive