CLINICAL PRACTICE ADVISORY 6

Chief Medical Officer
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Assisting the Police (who attend the hospital as the Coroner's Officer) following a reportable death

To report a death to the Coroner	• Telephone 13 14 44 to notify the Police. This commences the official process of reporting the death. • Police will attend the hospital to confirm the patient's identity and commence a *Police Report of the Death* for the Coroner.
What is to be preserved until the Police arrive?	• Please do not move the patient **without consultation** with police. • Please do not remove IVs, drains or equipment.
Who can verify the identity of the patient?	• If the Next of Kin is unavailable, a staff member who is able to identify the patient may be asked to verify identity. • It is appropriate for the staff member to sign an affidavit verifying the patient's identity.
What must I tell the police? Please provide the information verbally, as it informs the *Police Report of Death* and guides the Coroner's next steps. (If possible, prepare for these questions whilst awaiting police attendance)	Where available, you must provide factual information including: • Patient's Personal details (name, DOB, address) • Patient's Next of Kin and General Practitioner details • Date and place of death • Details of when the patient was last seen alive (and who was present) • Details of the person reporting the death • Admission circumstances (the reason for admission, was it elective or emergency, was there ambulance involvement?) • Treatment provided (a concise overview) • Relevant medical history (including any recent changes to Goals of Care) • Relevant Medication history • Why the death was considered reportable. • Apparent cause of death (if known).
May Police view clinical records or be provided with copies of medical records?	No. • For this to occur, written authority is required. • All requests for the release of clinical records must be made by the Coroner's Office to HIMS via a *Form 59*.
Role of the Police	• Police will attend the hospital on behalf of the Coroner. • Rarely, Police may exercise emergency powers to secure evidence. • **Doctors:** As well as providing the above information verbally, please complete the *SRLS notification* with any relevant, additional information and *Separation Summary*, as soon as possible.

If you need advice, please contact senior staff (e.g. the EDMS, EDON, Afterhours nurse manager and Statewide Forensic Medical Service).

This information is consistent with the *Coroners Act 1995* and Tasmanian privacy legislation. For further information see the *Statewide Death Reporting and Management (including MCCD) Policy* SDMS P20/79.