

# Information for patients, carers and families

## What to expect when a serious incident has occurred

We are sharing this information with you because you or someone you care for has been involved in a serious incident in a hospital or health facility. NSW Health would like to apologise for the distress caused to you and your family at this time.

We are committed to letting you know what happened and why it happened, learning from this experience and making changes to prevent future patient harm.

Your local health service will investigate the incident and make recommendations. This is called a serious incident review. All health services are required by law to complete serious incident reviews within 60 days of the incident happening.

This factsheet explains the steps your local health service will take to conduct the incident review.

### Our commitment

NSW Health is committed to:

- Communicating with you in an open and honest way about the serious incident.
- Being clear and timely in our communication with you.
- Inviting you to tell us about your experience, observations, concerns and feelings.
- Treating you with respect and compassion as we provide you with ongoing care and support for as long as you need.

### What happens next?

Your health organisation will:

- Tell you of a serious incident within 24 hours of it happening. This is called clinician disclosure. In some cases this may be delayed if the

incident isn't immediately recognised or the outcome for the patient isn't initially clear.

- Apologise as soon as possible.
- Arrange for a dedicated family contact person to support you and your family during the incident review process. Your family contact person will also update you on the progress of the review.
- Tell you what the review team found out, and the actions the organisation took in the first few days following the incident.
- Invite you to discuss the findings from the review and recommendations to prevent a similar incident happening in the future. We will do this within 60 days of commencing the investigation.
- Keep you updated on the implementation of these recommendations.
- Arrange for your family contact person to talk to you about how and when you would like to receive this information.

### Dedicated Family Contact Person

Your dedicated family contact person is an experienced healthcare worker who will:

- provide you with more detailed information to help you understand the review process
- answer any questions or concerns you may have
- keep you updated on the review of the incident
- link you in with the review team and other services that you may need.

Your dedicated family contact will maintain regular communication throughout the review process

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