

22 May 2009

Dear Friends

Update on issues concerning Gosport War Memorial Hospital

I am writing to update you on what is happening since the conclusion of the ten inquests in April.

The Inquest Verdicts

As I am sure you are all aware the jury found that the medication given contributed to the deaths in 5 out of the ten cases and in 3 of the cases the medication was inappropriate. The verdicts are vindication of the efforts of families who have fought for a decade for proper investigations into what went on. Given that this was only a sample of the suspicious deaths at Gosport and the jury arrived at these verdicts in spite of a far from perfect process and the withholding of information, the verdicts have added considerable weight to the calls for further investigations. Five families had legal representation, having been introduced to John White of Blake Laphorn solicitors by AvMA.

General Medical Council hearing re Dr Jane Barton

As you have probably heard, the fitness to practise hearing into the conduct of Dr Jane Barton is to begin on 8th June at 9:30 at Regent's Place, 350 Euston Road, London NW1 3JN. The hearing may go on until 21st August. If you wish to attend on any of the days, you should let the GMC know in advance as space is limited. AvMA will be there on day 1 and on other key days. Let my office know if you would like to meet, or if you are a witness and would like any additional support or advice from AvMA.

A Public Inquiry?

AvMA have written to health minister Ann Keen MP asking her to re-consider an earlier decision in response to one of the family members' request for a public inquiry. In her letter she had promised to reconsider her decision following the inquests. We pointed out the relevance of the inquest verdicts and also the fact that it had come to light that not only had families called for a public inquiry, but the Coroner himself, the Police and the County Council all had also! To date, we have not had a response, and we are not optimistic of our chances of getting a full public inquiry readily agreed to. In another massive hospital scandal in which AvMA is supporting families, in Stafford, there has been staunch resistance to holding a public inquiry in spite of much pressure. However, we will keep you posted.

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Other Inquests?

The date for an inquest into the death of Gladys Richards is still awaited. A number of other families have also expressed the desire to have an inquest into the death of their family member. These requests should be made to the Coroner. Contact AvMA or Blake Laphorn if you would like advice about this.

Legal Action?

A number of the families are still pushing for a fresh police investigation and a prosecution. Other legal options being explored include clinical negligence claims. If you wish to explore legal options do contact John White at Blake Laphorn.

Tel: E-mail:

Nurses at Gosport

Some family members have expressed concern about the role of certain nurses at Gosport and about their evidence. If anyone has already made a complaint about a nurse to the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) we would be grateful if you could share the information at AvMA, or if you would like advice in making a complaint to the NMC please contact us. Giving false evidence would of course be a disciplinary offence if proven.

Yours sincerely

Peter Walsh

Peter Walsh
Chief Executive