



Health Services Liaison Association Inc.

Level 30, 570 Bourke Street
Melbourne
Vic. 3000

ABN11 066 654 742

HSLA Newsletter June 2009

Welcome to our second quarterly newsletter for 2009. Our President, Caroline, is taking some leave so is not able to write her usual report for us.

We have organised our first workshop for the year focusing on how to manage difficult people and presented by Dr Grant Lester. We anticipate a high level of interest in this workshop so encourage you to register as soon as possible.

A review of our membership shows we have many interstate members and we welcome their participation and ideas through email or telephone contact. If you have any ideas or contributions for our newsletter such as interesting research papers or conference reports please contact us and let us know.

HSLA Committee.

HSLA Committee Membership-2009

Caroline Rose – President caroline.rose@thewomens.org.au

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HSLA Peer Support HELPLINE

Metropolitan Melbourne

Ann Howell Caulfield General Medical Centre, Vic 03 9076 6127

Jacque Flude Royal Melbourne Hospital, Vic 03 9342 7806

Rural Victoria

Jan Phillips Goulburn Valley Health, Vic 03 5832 2258

If in Victoria, have you attended an orientation session at the Office of the Health Service Commissioner?

If not give them a call on (03) 8601 5200

It is a very worthwhile experience and particularly for those CLOs who have just started in the role.

MANAGING THE ANGRY, DIFFICULT OR INTIMIDATING COMPLAINANT
Knowing what to do and when to do it

Date: Thursday 6th August

Time: 9:30am for morning tea and networking
10.30 – 1.30pm workshop session.

Venue: Office of Health Services Commissioner
Level 30, 570 Bourke St. Melbourne

Presenter: **Dr Grant Lester, Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist**

- Dr Grant Lester has developed a reputation as a very informative and entertaining speaker on this subject. He has completed several research projects and published on this topic. He has consulted widely throughout Australia to a variety of organisations and has recently developed a training program to assist organisations with the management of difficult complainants.

Cost: \$100 pp *includes morning tea before the workshop*

More information: Caroline Rose Ph 8345 2290

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TAX INVOICE & REGISTRATION FORM

Session/Course: Managing the Angry, Difficult or Intimidating Complainant. **Date:** 6th August 2009

Participant (1):

Participant (2):

Participant (3):

Organisation:

Number attending: @ \$100 pp **Total:** \$.....

Payment Options:

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)	
Account Name	HSLA
BSB	063349
Account Number	10022284

Cheque/Post 
<i>Cheque made payable to:</i>
HSLA
Level 30, 570 Bourke St
Melbourne VIC 3000

Please note HSLA is not registered for GST



HSLA Activities

During our HSLA Meeting in April 2009 we were very fortunate to have two guests from the Department of Human Services who shared with us their role in responding to Consumer complaints.

Below is an overview of their involvement in complaints.

DHS and our role in responding to patient queries and complaints

The Department of Human Services is Victoria's largest state government department, covering the responsibilities of the Ministers for Health, Mental Health, Senior Victorians, Community Services and Housing.

The department directly employs more than 13,000 people and plans, funds and delivers health, community and housing services in line with the government's vision for making Victoria a stronger, more caring and innovative state.

The Access and Metropolitan Performance (AMP) Branch sits within the Metropolitan Health and Aged Care Division (MHACS) of the Department of Human Services. The branch has responsibility for:

- Responding to public hospital demand and access pressures, managing and further developing the state-wide emergency, surgery, specialist clinic and Redesigning Hospital Care programs
- Enhancing accountability relationships with metropolitan Public Health Services, including negotiation of annual Statements of Priorities (SOP) and monitoring performance against key indicators
- Providing a metropolitan perspective on state-wide health policy and funding
- Supporting innovation in health service operations and performance to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public health services

The Minister for Health receives mail from a wide range of correspondents including; patients, family and friends of patients and Members of Parliament on behalf of constituents. The most relevant division or region in the department prepares a draft response.

The type of correspondence directed to the AMP branch includes responses related to statewide emergency and surgery programs, and patient queries or complaints about metropolitan health service performance. CLOs are also likely to receive requests for information from other divisions within the department. AMP typically receives 20 – 30 pieces of correspondence each month addressed to the Minister for Health.

The correspondent is often advised that it is appropriate for issues relating to clinical practices in any Victorian hospital to be directly investigated by the health service concerned. The name and contact telephone number of the relevant consumer liaison officer is provided. The response also advises when a departmental officer has contacted the CLO.

The AMP departmental officer contacting a CLO will typically ask for further information (eg. confirmation about waiting times and advice about appointment/surgery dates) or an investigation of the correspondent's concerns and a formal response from the health service. The information provided is used to inform the response. Given that the information will be used for a response from the Minister, it is often appropriate to obtain sign off from a senior executive. It is not appropriate for the Minister's response to contain a large amount of detail on individual cases, especially of a sensitive nature. If appropriate, the response will acknowledge any challenges involved in the situation and in general how the health service has responded. A concluding paragraph stating how the patient's complaint has been used to improve the service provided to other patients ends positively and demonstrates to the correspondent that their feedback was used constructively by the health service.

Should you have any queries or wish to discuss any issues in relation to this article or our role, please call Kim Gratjios Bannwart, AMP on 9096 7670 or Maree Roberts, Assistant Director AMP, 9096 1309.

Best practice in complaints management

HSLA is interested in identifying best practice in complaints management. If you have any strategies that may be useful for discussion please pass on your valuable information to us.

The following useful link to the NSW Complaints Management Policy was sent to Melbourne Health from a Member of the Community Advisory Committee

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/complaints/index.html>

We also need to look at customers/patients and their families being able to complain in different languages, at least the six main languages that we deal with.

Best Practices

The following paragraphs highlight four best practices for automated, complaint customer compliant management processes:

1. Classify customer complaints
2. Analyse and report trends
3. Take management action
4. Continuous improvement of the complaint process

Classify customer complaints – As individual complaints are recorded, the nature of the complaint, along with the product or service the complaint is about, requires classification. In the banking sector, for instance, complaints that violate federal laws, or internal bank policies and procedures should be classified separately from other customer service issues.

Analyse and report trends – Once complaints are classified, the data should be analysed and reported on a regular basis. The goal of analysis is to identify themes or trends that occur with front-line service delivery. This is done with an eye toward both regulatory matters, and those that help improve customer experiences. Given that many bank Ombudsmen report to their chief executive and board of directors on a semi-annual basis. This ensures complaint management activities receive senior executive attention and accountability.

Take management action – With issues identified, actions must be taken to improve front-line service delivery. This may include updating customer service standards, improving communications, or providing additional training to staff on products/services. Actions should remedy systemic issues. Changes should be monitored closely to ensure actions result in fewer customer complaints.

Continuous improvement of the complaint process – Although a complaints management process may exist, it is important to know how well it is working. Ask key questions to customers who use the system, including whether or not they view the process as accessible, easy to use, and fair. This will identify areas for improvement. Since research indicates that complaints handled professionally and in a timely manner result in customers continuing to do business with a company, it is essential that customers who complain are satisfied with the complaint management process. This will not only help retain business, but will also reduce the damage that negative “word of mouth” has with existing or potential customers.

Interesting Web-sites for your information

Hand hygiene: A critical factor in preventing influenza A (H1N1) virus spread The concern about a potential global pandemic is an important reminder to everyone that hand hygiene ... www.who.int/patientsafety/en

Health Complaints complaint expert UK available on-line
www.complaintexpert.couk/health

Quality and safety-complaints management available on-line
www.health.nsw.gov.au

Complaints policy: Department of health managing your organisation available on-line
www.dh.gov.uk

Member Profile

Name

Glenys Andrew

Position

Manager Executive Services (includes Complaints Management)

Organisation

East Grampians Health Service (EGHS) located at Ararat and Willaura

How long have you worked for EGHS?

12 years

Where do you live?

Moyston, which is at the foothills of the beautiful Grampians ranges

What skills do you use mostly in your role?

Multi-tasking

What is your favourite part of the job?

I love the challenges – every day there's something different - I never get bored

Describe your role in three words

Diverse, challenging, rewarding

What gets under your skin in your job?

When I don't achieve all I've planned

How do you deal with stress?

My dog is my best stress reliever. He loves me no matter what and he makes me laugh and if that doesn't work, I resort to Alcohol!

Who do you follow in Aussie Rules?

There's only one team – GO BOMBERS