



## Health Services Liaison Association Inc.

---

Level 30, 570 Bourke Street  
Melbourne  
Vic. 3000

ABN11 066 654 742

---

### HSLA Newsletter March 2009 – President's report

---

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2009. Following our AGM in November last year, we have a largely new committee, which brings new ideas, enthusiasm and opportunities to the HSLA. I look forward to harnessing this energy and sharing our ideas and events with you during the year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing committee for their hard work, great ideas, ongoing enthusiasm and friendship for the past few years. Under the very capable presidency of Ann Howell, the HSLA has made a significant contribution to the support and development of consumer and patient advocates throughout both Victoria and Australia.

Looking to the future, I am very excited about the new committee and the possibilities of what we might achieve together this year. Charlotta Ziems from the Eye and Ear Hospital, Lynn Griffin who continues on the committee as a representative of the Health Services Commissioner and myself from The Women's are the members remaining from last years' committee. I warmly welcome Noelene Stevens from the Austin Hospital who is our new Treasurer, Jacqui Flude and Tim Chiragakis both from the Royal Melbourne Hospital who have together taken on the role of editors of our newsletter, Trevor Bishop and Jo Snibson both from Delmont Private Hospital, Glenys Andrews from East Grampians Health Service and Linda Maddaford from Southern Health.

As you can see the committee has representation from both public and private, rural and metropolitan, mental health, general and specialist hospitals. We certainly hope to engage as many of you as possible during the year in our various activities.

We welcome feedback from our members at any time and are always keen to hear from you. In fact, we would love to hear from you, please contact either myself or other members of the committee to discuss any of your concerns, ideas or issues. Also please let us know you have a colleague who would like to receive our newsletter and/or notice of our seminars and workshops. There is no membership cost and we are happy to add interested people to our mailing list.

Victoria has certainly experienced unprecedented tragedy during the past few weeks. Our thoughts are with all those who have been touched by the fires in so many different ways.

Warm regards

Caroline Rose  
President HSLA  
[Caroline.rose@thewomens.org.au](mailto:Caroline.rose@thewomens.org.au)

---

## **HSLA Committee Membership-2009**

---

Caroline Rose – President [caroline.rose@thewomens.org.au](mailto:caroline.rose@thewomens.org.au)

Nolene Stevens- Treasurer [noelen.stevens@austin.org.au](mailto:noelen.stevens@austin.org.au)

Lynn Griffin-HSC Representative [lynn.griffin@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:lynn.griffin@dhs.vic.gov.au)

Charlotte Ziems [charlotte.ziems@eyeandear.org.au](mailto:charlotte.ziems@eyeandear.org.au)

Trevor Bishop [tbishop@delmonthospital.com.au](mailto:tbishop@delmonthospital.com.au)

Jo Snibson [jsnibson@delmonthospital.com.au](mailto:jsnibson@delmonthospital.com.au)

Lois Abraham [loisa@bhs.org.au](mailto:loisa@bhs.org.au)

Armit Dillion [dhillion@petermac.org](mailto:dhillion@petermac.org)

Jacqueline Flude [Jacqualine.flude@mh.org.au](mailto:Jacqualine.flude@mh.org.au)

Tim Chirigakis [Tim.chiragakis@mh.org.au](mailto:Tim.chiragakis@mh.org.au)

Glenys Andrew [gandrew@eghs.org.au](mailto:gandrew@eghs.org.au)

Linda Maddaford [lindamaddaford@southernhealth.org.au](mailto:lindamaddaford@southernhealth.org.au)

**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 CLO's who have just started in the role.**

---

It has been discussed at the last 2 HSLA meetings identifying best practice in complaints management. If you have any strategies that your organisation uses that may be useful for discussion please pass on your valuable information to us.

---

### **HSLA Peer Support HELPLINE**

---

#### **Metropolitan Melbourne**

Ann Howell    Caulfield General Medical Centre, Vic    03 9076 6127

Jacquie Flude    Royal Melbourne Hospital, Vic    03 9342 7806

#### **Rural Victoria**

Jan Phillips    Goulburn Valley Health, Vic    03 5832 2258

---

## **For your interest Only Future Conferences & Seminars**

---

1). QTMHC Conferences Quality and safety, Strategic directions, Health; Complaints, for Professions

Available on-line <http://www.health.qld.gov.au>

2). Health and Nursing Informatics Resource Centre. *Health Service Complaints Information and Knowledge in Health Care*. New South Wales health care complaints Commission. Available on-line

<http://www.achi.org.au>

3). Complaints about Doctor's AMA Victoria, Doctors play a pivotal role in influencing health, conferences, and seminars. Strongly emphasise conciliation in resolving complaints.

Available on-line <http://www.amavic.com.au>

4). Compliant handling in Health Services. A short day seminar available on-line

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au>

### **Seminars and Workshops in Victoria 2009**

It was agreed that seminars and workshops are of benefit for people working in a complaints area.

Suggestions put forward:

- Workshop/training with the Office of the Public Advocate on Open Disclosure.
- A 5pm session at the Office of Health Services Commissioner to give Complaints Officers and any one who is interested, an opportunity to meet to de-stress, discuss coping mechanisms with drinks afterwards.
- Dr Grant Lester- psychiatrist specialising in complaint management
- Communication training
- Train the Trainer
- Complaints Management
- Staff training /understanding the role of the Complaint Officer and the importance of the role

**If you would like to contribute your ideas regarding Seminars that would be beneficial, please don't hesitate to contact Caroline Rose.**

**[caroline.rose@thewomens.org.au](mailto:caroline.rose@thewomens.org.au)**

---

## **HSLA's New Mailing Address**

---

**Please note that the HSLA's mailing address has changed to:**

Level 30, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne 3000.

---

## **Interesting Websites**

---

### **Health Care Quality Strategies**

Healthcare Quality Strategies, Inc., (HQSI) partners with healthcare providers, organizations, communities, and consumers to make healthcare safer, more efficient, more effective, and more accessible. Our methods include assessing opportunities for improvement, sharing best practices, and designing strategies with measurable and sustainable results. Our goal is for consumers to receive high quality, patient-centred care with the best possible outcomes. URCA available on-line <http://www.hqsi.com>

### **Education and Training for Consumer participation in Health.**

Available on-line <http://www.participationinhealth.org.au>

### **Why is communication important in Health Care?**

Communication affects. Teamwork, Patient satisfaction: Patient Safety, patient management, and compliance with treatment (Victorian Government health information. Available on-line <http://www.health.vic.gov.au>

---

On the following page there is a case study for you to review. Please let us know if you have had a similar situation and the strategies that you employed at that time.

Feel free to send in other case studies that you found challenging in the workplace for the newsletter to [Jacqualine.flude@mh.org.au](mailto:Jacqualine.flude@mh.org.au)

---

## Case Study

---

Two brothers whose father had died 3 months previously in the hospital wanted to sit down with the treating doctors to discuss their concerns.

After receiving the request for this meeting, the medical history needed to be sought from Health Information Services. The names of the treating doctors at the time of death and the Head of Unit were found and they were contacted. Each required a review of the medical history to refresh their memories of the particular case.

After negotiating a time that suited each of the different parties, it was decided that the best location for the discussion was the Consumer Liaison Officer's (CLO) meeting room. The people present were the two brothers, Head of Unit, the Registrar who was present at the unsuccessful Code Blue, the treating Consultant and the CLO.

After introductions by the CLO, the older brother pulled out his list of questions about the treatment and subsequent death of their father. The main concerns were regarding the lack and tone of communication from the Registrar at time death as well as wanting to know why their father had died so quickly.

There were distinct ebbs and flows of the meeting, which contained both reasoned discussion and high emotion. The Head of Unit, an experienced professor, was able to provide a realistic yet compassionate medical view of why the father had died so quickly. He stated that doctors don't always know everything and that there are unknown factors always at play, particularly at an end-of-life situation of a very unwell man.

There was acrimony from the brothers towards the two other doctors. The Consultant took umbrage to this and there were some heated words. By the end of the hour long meeting, however, there was enough common ground for there to be a relatively satisfactory and harmonious conclusion.

The CLO and brothers had a 20-minute debrief at the end. This seemed to be important for them to transmute some anger into sadness at the loss of their father as well as to understand that the doctors were well intentioned.

One lasting outcome was that the meeting room was upgraded after this meeting due to pressure from the Head Of Unit. There had been chairs of uneven type and height, which was not conducive to a comfortable meeting. We now have freshly painted room that is about to be re-furnished for a better meeting environment.

In conclusion, it is sometimes important for people to verbally express their concerns regarding family members' treatment by medical professionals, especially where death is involved. There needs to be respect from both parties so that a positive resolution to an otherwise sad situation.

---

## Member Profile

---

**Name:**

Tim Chiragakis.

**Position:**

Consumer Liaison Officer- The Royal Melbourne Hospital, City Campus.

**How long have you had this position?**

About 7 months now...time flies.

**How did you get into this line of work?**

I had previously worked in hospital administration and after completing a Bachelor of Counselling I travelled then came home to find this job advertised. It all happened pretty quickly.

**What is your favourite part of the job?**

I think it would have to be the mediation aspect in both one-on-one and group settings. It's great to be able to have a positive influence on a difficult situation by opening up communication.

**What gets under your skin in your job?**

Property issues. Property issues. Property issues.

**What would make your job easier or better?**

If procedures were always followed then I wouldn't have to deal with claims for lost/broken dentures, orthotics, clothes, jewellery etc.

**How do you deal with stress?**

If I'm not present then I store it in my body or project it onto others. If I'm present, I can use it for good things like awareness, humour and art.