

Bill, Jonathan

From: Bill, Jonathan
Sent: 28 May 2004 13:05
To: McCann, Noel
Subject: Lucy Crawford Briefing

Mr McCann (for info...'cos this could become a big issue)

Following the video conference briefing with Minister yesterday, I have been doing some digging as regards the numbers of informal notification of incidents. Frankly the picture is not a good one. Notification is patchy, the numbers small and there is no overall analysis. I do think Minister is somewhat vulnerable to the accusation that the Department is not aware what is going on as regards serious incidents. (Secretary had taken the line that it was usual for CMO/Department to be notified, and Lucy Crawford was an exception....we have no empirical evidence to support this.)

However, on the upside:

If figures from NIAIC are indicative, deaths as a result of serious untoward incidents seem to be relatively low as a percentage of the number of incidents.

Within the HPSS, although there are inconsistencies, there does appear to be a high level awareness of the need to report untoward incidents.

My draft brief for Minister currently looks like this:

There is no unified reporting of untoward incidents in the HPSS to the Department.

The Department's NI Adverse Incident Centre based in Health Estates receives reports of, and investigates, untoward incidents associated with medical equipment and devices. Since 1998 there have only been 4 reported cases of death involving medical equipment or devices. To put this in context NIAIC received 241 reports of incidents in 2003 and has received 82 so far this year.

Elsewhere it has been the practice for Chief Executives and Medical and Nursing Directors in the HPSS to bring *significant* untoward incidents resulting in death to the attention of the Chief Medical Officer. This might occur up to 3 or 4 times a year. In addition there are other areas where untoward incidents are notified to the Department such as homicides or suicides involving psychiatric patients, again the numbers are very small (2/3 annually). However these are not collated centrally. In addition Minister will be aware that in March 2004 the Department introduced procedures to ensure the reporting of incidents of violence against staff working in the HPSS.

Jonathan