

17 December 2004

Mr & Mrs Roberts

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr and Mrs Roberts

As you will have been advised by Dr Nichola Rooney, I, in my role as Medical Director of the Royal Hospitals Trust, have been closely involved with your recent contact with the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children regarding the death of your beloved daughter Claire in 1996. May I take this opportunity to express my deep regret that the circumstances of Claire's tragic and untimely death have required to be further investigated at this time of year. I can only imagine how difficult this situation has been for you and your family and I am sorry for the added anguish which has undoubtedly been caused.

As you have been informed by Professor Ian Young of the Queen's University Belfast, our medical case note review has suggested that there may have been a care management problem in relation to hyponatraemia and that this may have significantly contributed to Claire's deterioration and death. In such circumstances it is necessary for the Trust to report the death to the Coroner for further investigation. I can now confirm that HM Coroner, Mr John Leckey, has been duly informed. With your permission, we have communicated to the Coroner that you are content with this and he has invited you to contact his office directly. The contact details are as follows.

Mr J Leckey  
HM Coroner  
Coroner's Office  
Courthouse  
Old Town Hall Building  
80 Victoria Street  
Belfast BT1 3FA

OR

Mr J Leckey  
HM Coroner  
Northern Ireland Court Service  
9-15 Bedford Street  
Belfast  
BT2 7LT  
Tel: [REDACTED]

I have enclosed, for your interest, some information pertaining to the role of the Coroner which you may find of some use. I understand you are remaining in contact with the hospital and that Dr Rooney is continuing to co-ordinate responses to a number of questions that you would wish to be answered, with a view to a further meeting in January 2005. I will be kept informed of your ongoing contact and wish to offer any help or support which you might find of use.

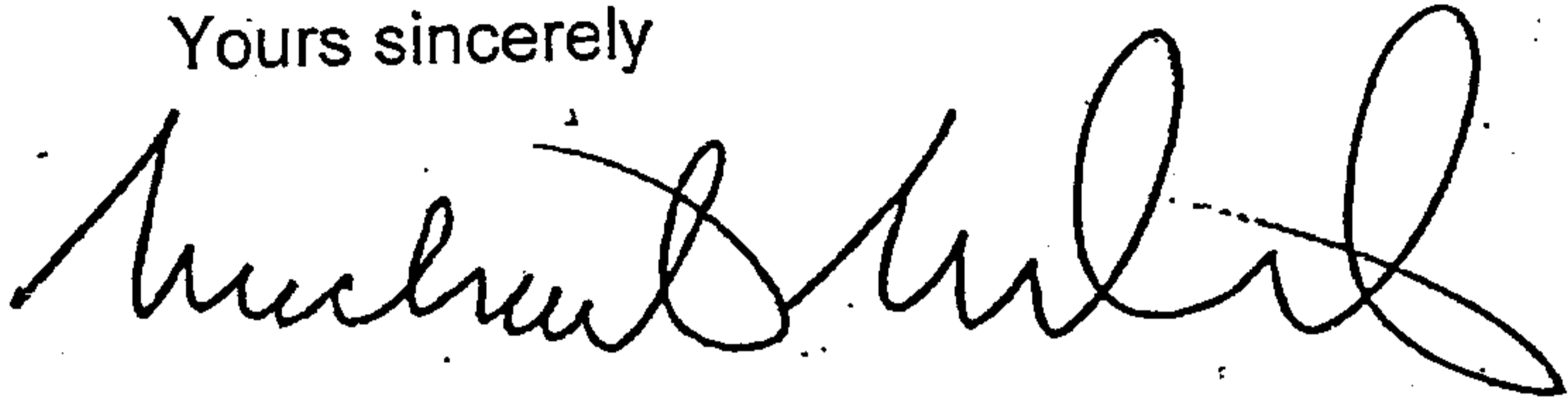
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Finally, may I once again offer my sincerest sympathy to you and your family and hope that you can manage to enjoy a peaceful Christmas.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael McBride', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

DR MICHAEL McBRIDE FRCP  
MEDICAL DIRECTOR

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