



## **Administrative Medicine Part II Fellowship Examination 2014**

### **Case Study 2**

Q.3

You are the Director of Medical Services at a large regional base hospital. You have just sat down to lunch when the Director of Psychiatry asks if he can join you. He tells you that within the last 24 hours he has spent considerable time and effort trying to sort out a complex complaint about the alleged poor care of an inpatient with chronic schizophrenia at a small facility serviced and managed from your base hospital. It appears that there is some validity to aspects of the complaint.

The sister and brother-in-law of the patient have been complaining about what they consider to be poor care of their relative. The Director of Psychiatry has become involved because staff at the outlying facility has been unable to deal with the concerns and the family has demanded a meeting with those in charge.

The Director of Psychiatry, who prides himself on his ability to defuse situations, tells you that yesterday he met with the sister and brother-in-law in his office and, before long, tensions rose. The brother-in-law, now irate, threatened to go to the media and announced that he had been recording the entire discussion on his phone. The Director told him that it was illegal to do this but this served only to heighten tensions further. The Director then told the family that the meeting was over and asked both of them to leave.

As if this was not bad enough, the Director of Psychiatry found out this morning that parts of the recorded audio of his meeting with the family has been uploaded onto YouTube and already there have been a number of hits.

He asks you for advice as to what he should do now and how to further investigate the issues at the small peripheral facility.



## Questions

1. What immediate advice would you give your Director of Psychiatry?
2. What role / action (if any) would you play in the short to medium term management of this issue?



## Key points

### Suggested areas that would need to be addressed not limited to:

- a) Provision of advice to the Director of the immediate issues that need to be addressed and their significance.
  - Discussion of patient safety if relevant
  - Staff safety if relevant
  - Conflict resolution,- theory and practice
  - Legal issues regarding recording of conversations
  - Legal status of family of patient (POA, guardianship etc)
  - Status of data published on web
  - Privacy and confidentiality of patient and medical records
  - Media involvement- significance of adverse publicity in a rural area
  - Obtainment of relevant medico-legal advice
- b) Provision of support to the Director and Facility staff
  - Welfare of Director of Psychiatry, his security and safety in a rural area
  - Security and safety for the facility's staff (irate brother-in-law)
- c) Method to address any legitimate issues of patient care at the facility and longer term process of review and improvement
- d) Actions – medium to long term:
  - Review complaints management processes
  - Education and training for key staff on management of complex complaints and the difficult complainant – HCC bodies in each jurisdiction