

## Media release

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### Big improvements needed in SA Health services – and the public must be kept informed

SA's leading health consumer organisation is concerned that patients and families affected by the state's chemotherapy under-dosing bungle were not kept fully informed about problems with their care.

'The recent mistakes in the delivery of our health care undermine the trust we have in our health services,' said Health Consumers Alliance Chief Executive Michael Cousins.

'These critical incidents have caused real and avoidable harm to patients and their families. They should not have happened.'

Mr Cousins was responding to the release of the second independent review into the incident notification, management and analysis of the incorrect dosing of chemotherapy at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre.

The review was conducted by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and released on Friday. It identifies significant deficiencies at the RAH and FMC.

'It is vital that proper attention is given to the deficiencies highlighted and that rapid action is taken to fix our health services,' said Mr Cousins.

'In particular, serious and sustained improvements are urgently need to be made to clinical governance, systems and culture in our hospitals. Current practices in these areas have significantly failed health consumers and their families.'

Mr Cousins noted that SA Health has accepted the review's recommendations and that two recommendations have been implemented.

He said ongoing transparency, and accountability, is crucial.

'I expect SA Health - and the hospitals involved - will publicly report on their progress in implementing the review's recommendations.

'This is vital if the community's trust is to be restored.'

Mr Cousins said health consumers have a right to health care that is safe, based on evidence and in line with accepted clinical guidelines.

'The needs and wishes of health consumers should be placed first when responding to failures in care,' he said.

'At the same time, we know that the staff in our health services turn up every day with the aim of providing good care and improving the health and wellbeing of their patients.

'Fixing the problems in clinical governance, systems and culture in our health system will help them achieve this.'

END

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