

HJT2647

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Assistant Coroner for Inner North London
Poplar Coroners Court
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Peter Morris OBE
Chief Executive
Trust Offices
Aneurin Bevan House
81 Commercial Road
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14 March 2014

By special delivery

Dear Sir

Inquest - Ms Bertha Cray

I write in response to your Regulation 28: Report to Prevent Future Deaths, dated 24 January 2014.

I am pleased to inform you that the investigation into your concerns regarding the ease of alteration of double-sided 'nil-by-mouth' signs at the bedside, as well the cause of the alteration, has now been concluded.

I am satisfied that this investigation has been sufficiently robust, in that we have scrutinised all relevant records, interviewed staff and have spoken with the family of Ms Cray to discuss their concerns and inform our investigation.

During the investigation, qualified nursing staff confirmed that the use of double-sided 'nil-by-mouth'/'sips of water' signs at the bedside was not the usual practice in the Trust. In this particular case, 'sips of water' had been written on the other side of the sign. This practice will now stop and new signs issued with the same instruction on both sides, so there is no option to amend the signs by writing on them.

As to the cause of alteration of the sign, the nurse involved was interviewed and explained that the 'nil-by-mouth' side of the sign was printed, whilst the writing on the other side was in green. This may explain why Ms Cray's family gave evidence that there were two different signs.

We have taken this as an opportunity to review our processes to enhance future care. The family has been informed of the outcome of the investigation and seemed reassured by the changes made by the Trust.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. I hope you are assured I have taken them seriously and investigated them appropriately.

Yours faithfully



Peter Morris
Chief Executive
Barts Health NHS Trust