



Medical Leader	•
Medical Expert	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicator	•
Advocate	
Scholar	
Professional	
Collaborator	
Manager	•

## Open Gate to Mental Health

2013 Sup

You are the Director of Medical Services of a large outer urban secondary level hospital providing acute public hospital services including emergency and inpatient mental health.

You are rung by the Police on a Tuesday night to advise that they have found a deceased male by the side of the local creek. Their initial investigations reveal that three days earlier police had taken the man to your Emergency Department to be scheduled/committed under the Mental Health Act ('the Act') for admission and treatment, after relatives had reported he had been behaving erratically and violently and threatening to harm himself and others.

You ring the Director of the Emergency Department to obtain further information. She advises that the man was scheduled under the Act on presentation to the Emergency Department and had been transferred to the inpatient mental health unit. You then ring the Nurse Manager of the mental health unit. He advises that the patient had indeed been brought to that unit, but that he had not been seen by medical staff, and had left the unit after about 14 hours through a side gate which had been left open. No action had been taken to follow-up the whereabouts of this patient by ward staff.

This is the first you have heard of this.

**What are the issues in this case, and how are you going to manage it?**



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Three (3) core requirements for this question

1. The candidate **MUST** identify this as a Sentinel Event.
2. Clinical governance issues
3. Immediate management responses required

Question writer's notes (these are not meant to be an exhaustive check-list but as prompts for Censors)

### Sentinel event

Incident reporting to CE, Chair or Board, Ministry of Health by Reportable Incident Brief (or equivalent). Management of incidents, and notification in the health service when they occur so that senior management know.

Involvement of and notification to police regarding absconding patients.

### Clinical governance

Duty of care issues. Responsibilities under Mental Health legislation. Review of patient assessment protocols. Answer the question: "Why had not medical staff reviewed the patient?"

### Management response

Notification of carers and relatives of other patients, GP, Community mental health team. Likely to be a media issue – the candidate should identify the need for a management plan. Immediate safety of other patients in the unit, unit security, management of the unit and its effectiveness, reporting systems in the health service, clinical governance in the unit, involvement of clinical director, medical leadership accountability and responsibility, staff and patient supervision in the unit. Management of incidents, and notification in the health service when they occur so that senior management know.

Involvement of and notification to police regarding absconding patients.