



ACTION WITHOUT NOTICE

2016 (November) – Day 2, Q4 (Choice)

Medical Leader	✓
Medical Expert	•
Communicator	✓
Advocate	✓
Scholar	
Professional	✓
Collaborator	✓
Manager	✓

You have just been appointed as the Deputy to the Chief Medical Officer of a large health network. Your network includes a large metropolitan tertiary-level teaching hospital and several smaller suburban and regional hospitals.

Your boss is currently flying overseas to attend an international conference and it is your first time 'in charge'. You are phoned by the Clinical Director of Anaesthesia at 4:30 p.m. She has just had a call from the operating theatre in one of the regional hospitals in your network. Apparently the anaesthetist rostered to provide the on-call service to that hospital from 5 pm has phoned switchboard to state that he was refusing to provide cover that night as a protest against senior management for the budget cuts that have been implemented in the Department of Anaesthesia.

In fact, he had apparently walked out before the end of the last theatre case, leaving it to his Registrar to manage the patient.

To make things worse, there is a list of other emergency cases, including a semi-elective caesarean section that requires an anaesthetic consultant to be present.

The Director says that she is unable to intervene in this situation as she feels the clinical managers have been made scapegoats by the manner in which the budget cuts were implemented.

Although new to the organisation, you are aware that the Board had recently mandated 5% budget cuts across the entire organisation. The Director of Anaesthesia had immediately placed severe restrictions on unrostered overtime and had signalled an immediate move to convert all staff anaesthetic positions to visiting medical specialist (VMS) positions.

Questions:

1. What are the issues you have to deal with?
2. What are your immediate actions?
3. What are your medium to long term plans?

CENSOR NOTES

This is a question that explores candidate's performance in the domains of Leadership, Medical Expert and Clinical Governance. The specific issues relate to:

1. Patient safety
2. Management of an industrial crisis and human resources management
3. Management strategies when faced with major financial stringencies. Appropriate planning and consultation when budget restrictions are imposed.

Immediate Actions

- Manage the need for specialist anaesthetic staff to be available for the evening emergencies – despite the Director's reluctance try to involve her in the immediate solution (candidate might discuss the issues around issuing a lawful directive to a senior manager to manage a particular situation).
- Try to contact the protesting anaesthetist to speak with him directly.
- Find out the number and nature of the emergency procedures apart from the semi-elective caesarean section.
- If cover cannot be secured, transfer of all emergency and semi-emergency surgery from the regional hospital to another facility.
- Alert senior staff in regional ED regarding current status re emergency surgery.
- Inquire after patient in ICU. Ensure open disclosure has occurred.
- Try to speak with the anaesthetic registrar, check welfare and offer support.
- Brief upwards – if your CMO cannot yet be contacted, brief CEO and media liaison.

Medium to Long-term Actions

- Behaviour of anaesthetist who abandoned his post – mandatory reporting to registration authority? Other disciplinary action?
- Medicolegal – formal investigation of whether complications to the patient were attributable to the absence of a senior clinician. If suspected, consider contacting health service insurers and legal advice.
- Review processes around implementation of budget cuts which immediately impinge on clinical services – what consultation? How communicated to staff? What industrial liaison occurred or should have occurred.
- Management training for clinical managers – the Anaesthetic Director does not appear to have had training in human resources or industrial issues.
- Are there regular meetings between senior management and the industrial organisations?
- If the budget is not available to maintain the current level of service provision at the regional hospital, consider a service review as to what can be safely provided within the existing budget.
- Look at workforce planning and rostering processes.



		Knowledge	Skills	Attitude/Behaviour
Poor	1	A rambling answer that does not include a discussion of the 3 main issues.	A non-structured description of how they would logically manage the 3 main issues.	Does not demonstrate an appreciation of the consequences of doing, or not doing, the required management activities.
Limited	2	May include a discussion of 1 or more of the key issues, but does not do it in a logical manner.	May describe successfully how to manage one of the 3 main issues but places inappropriate priority on other non-critical issues.	Only minimal appreciation of the consequences of doing, or not doing, the required management activities.
Borderline	2.	With, or without, prompting may provide a discussion of 2 or more of the key issues, but does not do it in a logical manner.	May understand the need to address the three key issues but can only describe some of the essential skills/ activities that would need to occur.	With, or without, prompting may have described the 3 key issues and the actions that are needed but does not fully appreciate the significance of his/her actions.
Meets standard	3	Clearly explains the 3 main issues and at least one additional issue.	Demonstrates that they have the basic skills to manage the 3 main issues and there is a reasonable priority setting of actions.	Demonstrates that he/she understands the basic significance of the actions that are undertaken / not undertaken and the broader ramifications for the hospital and its staff and patients.
Good	4	Provides information without prompting about the three main issues and most other related issues. Can also describe some current references that are topical and relevant.	Demonstrates that they know how to address all of the main and most other issues in a clear and logical manner. An understanding of how to manage 'unforeseen' issues such as uncovering harm that may have occurred to patients.	Not only demonstrates an understanding of the significance of addressing all of the issues but also demonstrates appropriate empathy for all of the affected parties. Understands there may be an impact on the hospital as a whole and possibly him/her self.
Outstanding	5	Excellent coverage of all of the issues that are involved, and inspire confidence that they would be able to manage this situation in reality. Full appreciation of all related contemporary knowledge on managing the main issues.	Excellent presentation with a clear and methodical logic as to how they would priority set the necessary actions to manage this situation. Also demonstrates the ability to predict possible consequences if actions do not go according to plan.	Clearly demonstrates that they know the full implications of the consequences of both successful and unsuccessful actions including those upon him/her self, the broader hospital staff and its service community.

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