

Media Release

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Serious and sentinel events same as last year

With the Serious and Sentinel Events in New Zealand hospitals report out today, BOPDHB has reported five events in the 2008/09 year, the same number as in the previous report.

“Any incident deemed a serious and sentinel event is a tragedy in this DHB. It affects staff as well as patients and families,” says chief operating officer Phillip Balmer.

“Our staff work very hard to ensure all patients receive the best care possible. Between our two hospitals and community services, more than 190,000 patient contacts occurred over the past year.”

Phillip says serious and sentinel events are very rare as for the most part, staff and systems work well to ensure a high level of care is delivered.

“Research suggests that most adverse events are caused by a series of small process failures and when they occur we take immediate steps to ensure they can’t happen again.

“On the very rare occasion that an incident occurs, an investigation is carried out by our staff, and often also by an independent review, either requested by us or by the Health and Disability Commission. If the investigation shows that a process or system was the cause, then this is improved or changed immediately, to ensure the same issues cannot occur again.”

Investigations generally result in recommendations that lead to system changes to prevent similar issues occurring again. Key changes since the last Serious and Sentinel Event report in February 09 are:

- Review of booking and handover processes
- Review referral processes around some surgical categories

- Greater range of training sessions included in the orientation of new staff

For more information on Serious and Sentinel Event reporting go to:

www.qic.health.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexcm/qic-sentinel-and-serious-events-report-0809

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