

HCSCC Media Release

24 November 2008

Complaints watchdog focuses on shonky services



Young children, Aboriginal people, the elderly and other disadvantaged South Australians are among more than 100 complaints being investigated by the state's Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner.

The HCSCC 2007-08 Annual Report highlights problems within the state's health system, both public and private, as well as with child protection services.

The majority of complaints were about health services, with the most common complaint being about consent, access to services and treatment.

By 30 June 2008 more than 2500 complaints had been accepted since HCSCC opened in October 2005. Last year alone, HCSCC accepted over 900 new complaints, 23% of which were made by people outside metropolitan Adelaide.

On average, the office deals with 62 new complaints each month – and more than 90 per cent are resolved within six weeks.

Contacts about child protection services this year were 59 for the metropolitan region and 22 for country regions.

The HCSCC provides free information and assistance to resolve complaints about public, private and non government health and community services, including child protection services.

HCSCC Commissioner Leena Sudano said the latest annual report highlighted the varied work undertaken by complaint staff – from dealing with fake doctors offering miracle cancer cures to resolving problems over basic care in a doctor's surgery.

Other key outcomes included a significant training program for 160 nurses, midwives and directors of nursing. The "Safer Conversations" program trained nurses to increase their skills when responding to consumer and carer complaints.

HCSCC also provided help and advice to Aboriginal people, and disadvantaged South Australians, as well as handled complaints about the care of young children.

"Our obligation is about making sure that people who find it hard to get services, or to receive good, safe services are given help to voice their concerns," Ms Sudano said.

Summary of health complaint issues investigated in 2007-2008:

Complaint Issues	
access	113
communication	34
consent	147
privacy/discrimination	8
professional conduct	66
treatment	74
unable to resolve with provider	16
other	119

HCSCC 2007-2008 Annual Report will be available at www.hcsc.sa.gov.au after tabling in SA Parliament

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