

Nurse Maude breaches standard of care stopping insulin checks and catheter care
20HDC00940

A man's rights under the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights were breached by Nurse Maude while he was receiving its in-home care services, the Deputy Health and Disability Commissioner has found.

In a decision released today, Dr Vanessa Caldwell said Nurse Maude had not provided services to the man with reasonable care and skill. The man had been residing in an independent living unit until he was admitted to hospital. He needed rest home level care from the time he was discharged until his he passed away.

“Mr A's family believes that failures by Nurse Maude caused, or contributed to, the decline of his health to the extent that he could no longer live independently. I offer my condolences to his family for their loss,” she said.

The findings relate to the management of the man's insulin injections and catheter. The man had been administering his own insulin but started to struggle with this, so a registered nurse organised daily checks. When he appeared to be back on track with his self-management, this was reduced from daily checks to checks occurring during his scheduled catheter care visits.

However, as a result of human error, he did not have any further catheter care visits scheduled. The man called Nurse Maude requesting a new catheter bag a month, but that call was never actioned.

After not receiving catheter care for four months, the man was taken to a hospital emergency department. He was found to be suffering from an urinary tract infection, and he had life-threatening complications from an extended period of high blood sugar due to missed insulin injections. Some cognitive decline was also noted.

Dr Caldwell agreed with expert advice that there had been a serious departure from accepted practice when Nurse Maude did not notify the man's GP when his insulin management was reduced, particularly given his earlier experiences.

She was also critical of its discharge management at the time. “The erroneous discharge, caused by an inadequate process at Nurse Maude, created the situation where Mr A was not receiving any district nursing care for months, while his family and GP were unaware the visits had stopped. With no clinical

intervention, Mr A's deterioration and hospital admission was not unexpected," she said.

Dr Caldwell commented that the care home company's clinical documentation of its review of the events was inadequate.

Dr Caldwell recommended Nurse Maude formally apologise to the man's family, develop a system to manage the central coordination of clients needing catheter care, and provide HDC with the results of a three-monthly audit of its adherence to a district nursing discharge procedure from 2022 to the present.

She recommended the care home company provide education and staff training on clinical documentation, and audit adherence to its policy on responses to call bells and emergency procedures. All recommendations are to be reported back to HDC.

16 September 2024

Editor's notes

Please only use the photo provided with this media release. For any questions about the photo, please contact the communications team.

The full report of this case can be viewed on HDC's website - see HDC's '[Latest Decisions](#)'.

Names have been removed from the report to protect privacy of the individuals involved in this case.

The Commissioner will usually name group providers and public hospitals found in breach of the Code unless it would not be in the public interest or would unfairly compromise the privacy interests of an individual provider or a consumer. More information for the media, including HDC's naming policy and why we don't comment on complaints, can be found on our website [here](#).

HDC promotes and protects the rights of people using health and disability services as set out in the [Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights](#) (the Code).

In 2022/23 HDC made 592 quality improvement recommendations to individual complaints and we have a high compliance rate of around 96%.

Health and disability service users can now access an [animated video](#) to help them understand their health and disability service rights under the Code.

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For more information contact:

Communications team, Health and Disability Commissioner

Email: communications@hdc.org.nz, Mobile: +64 (0)27 432 6709