

Entry Permit Holder Report

SafeWork SA

Application ID 20464553

Entry Permit Holder	
Full Name:	Bernadette Mulholland
Permit Number:	ET-22-03868
Union Represented:	South Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association
Worksite Entered	
Business Name:	Mt Barker District Soldiers Memorial Hospital Emergency Department
Industry:	Other Health
Address:	87 Wellington Road, Mount Barker 5251
Date workplace entered:	01 November 2024

I Bernadette Mulholland am of the opinion that the PCBU has contravened the WHS legislation relating to:			
	Alleged Contravention	More information	Was the contravention rectified?
PCBU Alleged Contravention 1	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>Advised by medical staff of multiple incidences that have occurred regarding violent patients in the Mt Barker Emergency Department leaving them and the other clinical staff unsafe working in the emergency department.</p> <p>There is no on site security so these violent and aggressive events are meant to be handled by the frontline emergency department workers.</p> <p>The Local Health Network are using the emergency staff to fill in the</p>	No

		<p>security duties taking doctors away from the care of other patients and they are not trained as a security guard. There is a growing reliance on using clinical staff to address this safety hazard.</p> <p>The police were close by when the patient first displayed aggressive and violent behaviour towards the staff including the doctors. The patient had to be firstly sedated but there was concern for everyone's wellbeing if the patient woke up. There was real concern if this patient who was sedated woke up, he would again become violent and aggressive.</p>	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 2	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>The guy was in custody and came into the emergency department he was aggressive and violent. The incident occurred about 6.00 PM on the Sunday evening, there were two to three police officers with the patient and more were called. There was chaos.</p> <p>The patient was consuming a number of clinical personnel and it was a busy shift. There was a shortage of one doctor on the roster. Luck played a part in that there were not more significant injuries. The patient was lashing out and violent. In the same area was a small child watching in the paediatrics area. The event called the clinical staff away from the child and understandably the parents were unhappy who needed the doctors help but the doctors had to restrain the aggressive patient.</p> <p>There was difficulty keeping staff safe and the patients safe. The staff were good, looking out for each other. The doctors, nurses and police were trying to stop the patient hurting others and hurting himself.</p>	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 3	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>The event called the clinical staff away from the child and understandably the parents were unhappy who needed the doctors help but the doctors had to restrain the aggressive patient.</p> <p>There was difficulty keeping staff safe and the patients safe. The staff were</p>	No

		<p>good, looking out for each other. The doctors, nurses and police were trying to stop the patient hurting others and hurting himself. Some of the doctors were assisting the police, the patient was pushed face down and the doctors were assisting to handcuff the patient. A couple of the doctors suffered minor injuries.</p> <p>SAPOL response good but still the community is growing and we need a security guards, there are a limited number of SAPOL Officers in this area and they are also not employed to act as quasi security guards.</p> <p>The medical staff in the emergency department stated that there needs to be a security officer presence at the hospital 24/7 and failure to do so by the employer “reflects they are prioritising money over the c</p>	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 4	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>The employer does not care about our wellbeing quite the opposite they are training us all up to act as security in the emergency department. What we don't understand is why places in the country such as Mt Gambier and Whyalla have security and we don't.</p> <p>The security guard provides a presence they provide an impression of authority and presence.</p> <p>There is real concern that the physical restraint training that the employer is paying large sums of money is to use staff as security guards. The training includes a practice to “take down” patients who are aggressive.</p> <p>The doctors and nurses should not be security and placing themselves in harms way. SAPOL crews are limited. The doctors stated that “we are not their security service whilst we are attending to these situations, we are leaving other patients who need our care alone”.</p>	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 5	Not maintaining a safe work environment	The doctors stated, “that the security guards at the hospital provides confidence to staff, deterrent for bad behaviour by patients, protects other	No

		<p>patients and when these aggressive events happen allows the security guards to do their jobs".</p> <p>There is a real fear factor coming to work and the ED staff tend to gravitate to some of the larger doctors to assist with aggressive or violent patients. Some staff are scared to go to their cars at night, a security guard could escort staff and patients to their cars when required particularly after a violent event in the emergency department.</p> <p>The SLs that are submitted for violence and threatening events by the patients in the emergency department are only the tip of the iceberg of what is happening in the emergency department.</p> <p>The Entry Permit Holders noted the stop violence posters hanging up in the emergency department but it was not a deterrent of patients being violent and aggressive.</p>	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 6	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>SASMOA contacted the employer and asked for a security guard to be placed in the emergency department. The employer's representative said that it was nearly 3.00 pm on a Friday afternoon and they would be going home soon so would not be able to organise a security guard. SASMOA then requested when could the Local Health Network provide an answer and was told the following Friday by close of business.</p> <p>SASMOA talked about the incident to the employer's senior executive for the Local Health Network and the delegate stated that the situation was a couple of weeks ago. The delegate stated they didn't know what help security guards would provide anyway and that the Local Health Network administration didn't like having security guards but didn't say why they didn't have guards and others did. The employer delegate was unaware there had been minor injuries. SASMOA asked if the Executive knew about the</p>	No

		incident and had gone to see the staff. T	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 7	Not maintaining a safe work environment	. The delegate stated they did not want to answer that question. SASMOA stated that for the health and safety of staff and reducing fear would security guards not be reasonable the senior executive for the employer did not believe so. The Local Health Network agreed pursuant to S118 to provide the SLSs for the last 3 months but these have yet to be provided.	No