



Mick Gentleman MLA

Minister for the Environment and Heritage
Minister for Planning and Land Management
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister assisting the Chief Minister on
Advanced Technology and Space Industries
Manager of Government Business
Member for Brindabella

Mr Bob Buckley
Chair
Speaking Out for Autism Spectrum Disorder
Email: chair@sofasd.org.au

Dear Mr Buckley

Thank you for your letter of 22 July 2019 about emergency incidents involving people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

Police officers, ambulance paramedics, and healthcare workers undertake ongoing training in mental health conditions, including the treatment of patients with autism spectrum disorder. They are cognisant of the variety of ways these patients may present, and how to manage and treat them.

Any case where a patient is threatening self-harm presents a real danger to the patient and the responding ambulance paramedics. All calls of this nature must be taken seriously and on the basis that the threats will be followed through. Due to the serious nature of these concerns, and the potential risks associated with these calls, a response from police is also warranted to ensure patient and staff safety.

The ACT Government and its relevant agencies are always looking at ways to deliver better outcomes for mental health consumers. ACT Policing, the ACT Ambulance Service, and ACT Health are all currently working together on a joint initiative to provide an enhanced capability to respond to patients in the community with mental health conditions, including those with autism.

The PACER (Police, Ambulance and Clinician Early Response) initiative will see a dedicated mental health team consisting of a paramedic, a mental health clinician, and a police officer, attending acute mental health cases in the community. The model aims to provide in-situ safe care, assessment and treatment, and to minimise hospital Emergency Department presentations. This approach is also designed to be less confronting, taking into account the vulnerabilities, fear, and apprehension of these patients.

ACT Legislative assembly

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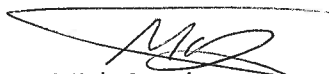
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Additional training will be provided to staff selected to participate in this initiative, with the outcomes to be used to inform how we respond to emergency situations for patients with mental health conditions.

Thank you for raising this matter with me. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Mick Gentleman MLA

Minister for Police and Emergency Services

8/8/19