

Question on Notice

No. 1069

Asked on 14 October 2022

DR M ROBINSON ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON Y D'ATH)—

QUESTION

With reference to answers to Questions on Notice No. 1701 of 2016 and No. 1138 of 2017—

Will the Minister detail the number of SAC1, SAC2 and SAC3 incidents, (reported separately by code and calendar year) from 2018 to present?

ANSWER

Queensland has a world-class health system that has carried us through COVID-19. Our healthcare providers, including Queensland Health staff, take seriously the safety of the patients for whom they care and provide treatment.

Queensland Health has worked hard to develop a patient safety culture that actively encourages staff to report clinical incidents and see these as opportunities to learn about and address issues. The analysis of these incidents helps Queensland Health better understand the factors that contribute to patient incidents, and implement changes aimed at improving safety.

It is important to acknowledge that there is a degree of clinical subjectivity in deciding whether an adverse outcome is a clinical incident and this assessment may change on review. For example, a death may not have been reasonably expected and, therefore, met the definition of a SAC1 incident but is later determined to have been the result of an underlying condition.

I am advised that interpreting numbers of clinical incidents, comparing the number of clinical incidents between Hospital and Health Services, or using the number of clinical incidents as indicators of performance is not advised due to:

- the classification of an adverse patient outcome as a clinical incident does not describe 'negligence' or 'fault' on behalf of staff or systems;
- not all clinical incidents are preventable; and
- higher incident reporting rates are generally accepted as an indicator of a positive and transparent safety culture, rather than a marker of less safe care.

As such, I am advised by the department, that it is not appropriate to provide the specific information sought as to do so would also require a substantial explanation to be provided, per case, to ensure the information is interpreted and understood correctly.