



Information Communiqué

Head of British Agency Recognized as World Leader Shares Perspective at Patient Safety Forum on Mental Health

Healthcare Providers and the Public Invited to Share Views May 5, 2010

For Immediate Release

May 3, 2010 (Winnipeg, MB): On Wednesday, May 5, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. at the St. Boniface Research Centre, 351 Taché Avenue in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the Manitoba Institute for Patient Safety and the College of Registered Psychiatric Nurses of Manitoba (CRPNM) will co-host a public forum for patient safety in Mental Health. The event is supported by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA).

The central forum speaker will be Dr. Ben Thomas, the Director of Mental Health and Learning Disability for the National Patient Safety Agency, Department of Health, England and National Health Service, United Kingdom. Dr. Thomas will provide his insights and experiences in creating programs and initiatives that have helped make the agency a world leader in patient safety in mental healthcare.

Included in the improvements to patient safety in mental health:

- Following the introduction of a national suicide strategy, rates have fallen in the general population and there has been a 36% decrease in the number of inpatients dying by suicide.
- Lives have been saved since a rapid response report on resuscitation in mental health settings led to the creative of a rolling program of basic life support (BLS) for all staff and access to BLS equipment.
- Highlighting the high numbers of people absconding from inpatient units led to national strategies to reduce missing persons.

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PREMIER MEMBERS

The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) has a database of 3.5 million patient safety incidents. The agency receives 130,000 incidents related to mental health per year.

Dr. Thomas has been responsible for producing the Good Practice Guidelines on the Independent Investigation of Serious Patient Safety Incidents in Mental Health; the Seven Steps to Patient Safety for Mental Health; Resuscitation in Mental Health and Learning Disability Services, and Preventing Harm to Children From Parents with Mental Health Needs. He was instrumental in developing the suicide prevention toolkit for inpatient care.

Dr. Thomas has also held a number of senior clinical, managerial and academic positions in the UK and in Australia, and has served on a number of ministerial reviews and advisory committees to governments in Malaysia, South Korea, Australia and China. He is the author of more than 100 chapters and articles and has edited three text books on mental health.

The May 5th forum is free of charge. No advance registration is required to attend the Winnipeg-based Forum in person. Those wishing to participate from outside of Winnipeg may have the opportunity to view and interact live from other communities with the Winnipeg-based forum participants. A live interactive broadcast is available at Regional Health Authorities outside Winnipeg. Healthcare providers and members of the public can call TeleHealth for information at 1-866-667-9891.

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