



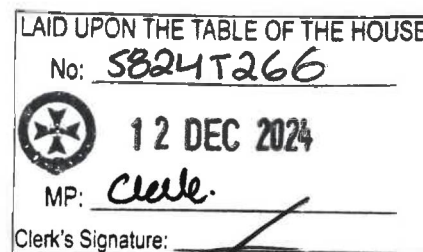
## Minister for Health and Ambulance Services

1 William Street Brisbane Qld 4000  
GPO Box 48 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3035 6100

C-ECTF-24/14820

Mr Neil Laurie  
Clerk of the Parliament  
Queensland Parliament  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Email: ClerksOffice@Parliament.qld.gov.au



Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 4159-24, tabled in Parliament on 10 September 2024, in relation to the proposal to implement 'Zara's Rule' in emergency departments and wards.

I would like to offer my deepest condolences to Ms Mulheran and her family for the loss of Zara. I thank Ms Mulheran for her suggestions for helping parents and staff to escalate their concerns, and I understand her, and her family want to see improvements that might prevent similar outcomes for others.

All Queensland Health clinicians make decisions on a daily basis using their clinical judgement to provide patients with the most appropriate care and treatment, based on individual patient clinical needs. In providing this care, Queensland Health has well-established processes to identify when a patient is deteriorating and needs immediate intervention, including processes to address patient and family concerns.

Ryan's Rule was designed to help patients and their families and carers to raise concerns when they are worried that a patient's health condition is getting worse or not improving as well as expected. Where a patient, family member or carer enacts Step 3 and calls 13HEALTH, and there is immediate or urgent clinical deterioration concerns, the 13HEALTH operator will transfer the call directly to a nurse at the hospital. I am advised that Queensland Health is currently enhancing and trialling improvements to Ryan's Rule to make it more accessible and easier for patients, families and carers to use. Queensland Health has undertaken a pilot to expand the use of Ryan's Rule in the Redcliffe Hospital Emergency Department adult and paediatric waiting areas. I am advised that the subsequent evaluation of the pilot will enable consideration for the use of this expanded model in more Emergency Department waiting areas.

I have learned that Queensland Health has a number of adult and paediatric early warning and response system charts that support nursing staff to identify patient deterioration early and to communicate their concerns to medical staff. The patient's vital signs, such as breathing rate, blood pressure, heart rate and temperature, are monitored and recorded on the chart. Each time the patient's vital signs are taken, an early warning score is generated. The higher the early warning score, the more frequently the patient will be monitored and escalated for further medical assessment. If the early warning score triggers a certain level, the patient will receive an immediate review and intervention from the hospital's Medical Emergency Team.

Furthermore, I am advised that Queensland Health is also currently planning a pilot to enhance the paediatric early warning and response system charts whereby a parental concern section would be added. The parental concern section will involve the nurse who is caring for the patient, asking the parent if they feel their child's condition has worsened and if they are now more worried. This question will be asked each time the patient's vital signs are taken. If the parent replies with 'yes' to this question, it will then immediately be escalated to the team leader for review and further escalation to medical staff as required.

Thank you for raising this important matter with me and I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Nicholls', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Tim Nicholls MP**  
**Minister for Health and Ambulance Services**  
**Member for Clayfield**