

Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital announces incident involving transferring patient body to public mortuary

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (PYNEH) made the following announcement today (March 8) regarding an incident of transferring a patient body to a public mortuary:

A patient was sent to the Accident and Emergency Department (A&E) of PYNEH by ambulance on February 28 in critical condition. The patient's condition deteriorated and the person succumbed on the same day. According to the prevailing protocol, a patient death in the A&E is a reportable death to the Coroner, and the body will be transferred to a public mortuary for subsequent legal procedures.

During the arrangement of transferring the abovementioned body to a public mortuary on March 3, it was found that the body had already been transferred to the Victoria Public Mortuary (VPM). According to the hospital record, the Police had arranged with the A&E of PYNEH to transfer a number of bodies to the VPM on February 28. Identity checking was conducted by a police officer and hospital staff prior to the transferal. The hospital has conducted a preliminary investigation and cross-checked the information of the two deceased patients. They were of the same gender and their English names looked alike. It was suspected that confusion was encountered during the identity checking process conducted by the hospital staff and the police officer that could have led to the wrong release of the body to the public mortuary. PYNEH had communicated with the departments involved for a timely follow-up of the incident.

PYNEH is very concerned about the incident and has contacted the families involved to extend sincerest apologies. Relatives had been arranged to identify the body yesterday (March 7). The incident has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office via the Advance Incident Reporting System. The hospital has reinforced the importance of correct identifications to staff. The hospital will further investigate the incident and recommend improvement measures.