

## **Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal**

### ***The Director of Proceedings v Henry — 30 November 2005***

Registered nurse Mr Geoff Henry pleaded guilty to a charge of professional misconduct arising from the professional services provided to an elderly patient who was receiving full-time private care from Medforce, the nursing agency of which Mr Henry was the Director and Manager. The patient was cared for in her own home for a period of 15 months, from August 2000 until November 2001. From mid-February 2001 to May 2001, the patient was cared for by caregivers during the day, with a registered nurse undertaking some night shifts; from the end of June 2001, no registered nurses were rostered on for any shifts. The patient developed ischaemic ulcers on her feet and significant pressure sores on her torso, from which she later died.

The Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal found that: there was an inadequate nursing plan in relation to pressure areas, nutritional status, weight monitoring and pain management; the use of adequate or appropriate wound care products or equipment had not been ensured; there was inadequate assessment and monitoring of the patient's feet; and there was inadequate training of staff and involvement of a registered nurse.

In finding that cumulatively the particulars amounted to professional misconduct, the Tribunal noted that "Mr Henry, and others in his circumstances, must appreciate that when they accept the responsibility for caring for elderly, vulnerable patients there are minimum standards that must always be adhered to. The plight of the patient in this case, and the overall inadequacy of her care has been a source of considerable concern and distress to the Tribunal. That concern and distress is reflected in the Tribunal's unanimous decision that Mr Henry must be found guilty of professional misconduct."

At the time of the hearing, Mr Henry was no longer practising as a nurse. By way of penalty, the Tribunal imposed conditions for a period of three years, should Mr Henry return to practice: that he not practise as a sole practitioner in the aged-care sector, and that he undergo a competency assessment. A full copy of the decision can be found at [www.hpdt.org.nz](http://www.hpdt.org.nz) (22/Nur05/07D).