

**Communication between rest home staff and medical officer
(07HDC09104, 5 December 2007)**

*Rest home ~ Registered nurse ~ Medical officer ~ Enduring power of attorney ~
Communication ~ Constipation ~ Rights 4(3), 6(1)*

A woman complained about the services provided to her elderly mother by a private hospital. She had requested that a doctor review her mother because of abdominal pain, but this information was not passed on to the doctor when he attended later that day, and the woman was not reviewed. When the daughter returned the following day, she was advised, incorrectly, that the doctor had reviewed her mother.

The daughter subsequently decided to take her mother to a public hospital, where she was admitted. She was diagnosed as being constipated, with pain secondary to haemorrhoids. She was discharged back to the private hospital, and died a few days later.

It was held that the rest home did not have appropriate systems in place to ensure that the elderly woman had services provided consistent with her needs, and failed to ensure that she was reviewed by a doctor, thereby breaching Right 4(3). Staff failed to advise her daughter, who held enduring power of attorney, of the outcome of her request for medical review, breaching Right 6(1).