

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, N.S.W.

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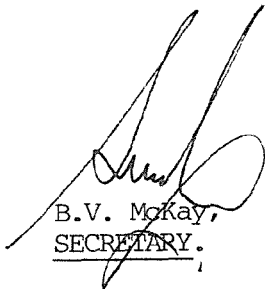
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NOTIFICATION OF CHILDREN AT RISK -

1. Circular No. 82/134 "Inter-departmental Guidelines on Child Abuse" issued on 12 May 1982 outlines the responsibilities of health and other workers when reasonable grounds exist to suspect child abuse.
2. In New South Wales, under Section 148B of the Child Welfare Act 1939, medical practitioners must notify the Department of Youth and Community Services if reasonable grounds exist to suspect that a child has been assaulted, ill-treated or exposed.
3. Any other person may notify upon similar grounds or if there are grounds to suspect that a child is neglected.
4. All health workers are encouraged to notify the Department of Youth and Community Services whenever children are thought to be abused or at risk.
5. The Department of Health requires health personnel to submit written notification to the Department of Youth and Community Services in addition to any verbal notification which may occur. Failure to do so could result in officers being liable to be charged under the Child Welfare Act. Verbal notifications may be made on a 24-hour basis at the Child Protection and Family Crisis Service, Department of Youth and Community Services, telephone 745 2233.
6. The Child Welfare Act also contains provision which protects the person notifying:
 - (a) the notification shall not be held to constitute a breach of professional etiquette or ethics or a departure from accepted standards of professional conduct;
 - (b) no liability is incurred by reason of the making of the notification;
 - (c) the notification shall not constitute a ground for civil proceedings for malicious prosecution or for conspiracy.

20/2/84

7. A sub-committee of the Working Party on the Care of Victims of Sexual Assault is continuing review of these matters and further information can be obtained from Mr. John Gavaghan of the Southern Metropolitan Health Region, telephone 818 0200.



B.V. McKay,
SECRETARY.