

Inquest into the death of ABC (a pseudonym)

On 16 May 2023 ABC was located unresponsive in their residence sitting in a lounge chair. It was determined they had passed away. An opened voluntary assisted dying (VAD) self-administration oral substance medication kit was located nearby, its' contents were empty, and it appeared to have recently been consumed. ABC was not a VAD patient, their spouse was, but when their spouse was unable to use their supplied VAD self-administration oral substance they later received a practitioner administered VAD IV substance and they passed away in hospital on 8 May 2023. The unused and unrequired VAD self-administration oral substance that ABC had used to end their life had not been returned, as required, for appropriate disposal.

Coroner David J O'Connell delivered his findings of inquest on 11 September 2024.

The Queensland Government responds to recommendations directed to government agencies at inquests by informing the community if a recommendation will be implemented or the reason why a recommendation is not supported.

The departments named in this response will provide implementation updates until the recommendation is delivered. Further information relating to the implementation of recommendations can be obtained from the responsible minister named in the response.

Recommendation 1

To prevent the VAD substances for self-administration being used by individuals for whom it is not prescribed, it is recommended Queensland Health change VAD procedures to provide for the supervision of the VAD substance by an authorised health practitioner at all times.

Response and action: implementation of the recommendation is under consideration.

Responsible agency: Queensland Health

On 10 June 2025 the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services responded:

Following the incident, Queensland Health took immediate action to mitigate risk including regulatory amendment, earlier notification and follow up for disposal of substance, and proactive monitoring of Births, Deaths and Marriages data. Supervised self-administration has always been an option, and steps have been taken to ensure people are aware of this choice, should they wish to choose it. Supporting processes have been implemented.

Queensland Health is currently considering the recommendation.