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PRESS RELEASE

14 OCTOBER 2008

**CORONER RETURNS CRITICAL VERDICT ON
DEATH AT KETTERING GENERAL HOSPITAL**

The death of a young woman aged 29 years at Kettering General Hospital in November 2002 was the result of a multi-faceted and multi-layered systemic failure involving staff at all levels according to the verdict returned today at the conclusion of an inquest before the Assistant Deputy Coroner for Northamptonshire.

The Coroner found that:

“Mrs Benson was admitted to Kettering General Hospital on the 20th of November 2002 with a history of being unwell for 6 days. She was reviewed by a number of doctors. Tests, x-rays and ct scans were performed but no diagnosis of her illness was made.

Her condition deteriorated during the evening/night of 22/23 November but she was not reviewed by medical staff. She developed pulmonary oedema and suffered a cardio-respiratory arrest between 10.30 and 11 and died at 12.55 on 23rd November 2002.

Her death was contributed to by a failure of the system for recording, reporting and acting upon patient observations resulting in a loss of opportunities to render medical treatment.”

This verdict is the result of a long battle fought over the intervening years by Mrs Benson’s husband, Mr Andrew Benson, in the face of a dismissal of his concerns, first by the hospital, and then by the Coroner for Northamptonshire who declined to hold any inquest at all until compelled to do so by the threat of proceedings before the High Court.

The response of the hospital to Mr Benson’s initial complaint was wholly inadequate, based on a purported investigation that failed to properly review the available records, and therefore resulted in a wholly misleading picture of the events leading to the death.

After returning his verdict, the Coroner announced his intention to make recommendations – to Kettering General Hospital and to the Secretary of State for Health – on the system for observations of patients and alerts for urgent medical reviews.

Note:

Mr Benson was represented by:

Ms Megan Phillips of Bhatt Murphy Solicitors &

Mr Robin Oppenheim QC of Doughty Street Chambers

For further information, please call Megan Phillips on 020 7729 1115 or e-mail on m.phillips@bhattmurphy.co.uk .