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## Tragic Death of Six-Year-Old After Double Discharge from Sydney Children's Hospital Prompts Investigation

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On August 4, 2025, a six-year-old girl died at Northern Beaches Hospital (NBH) after being discharged twice from Sydney Children's Hospital (SCH) in Randwick, sparking a coronial inquest and a joint Serious Adverse Event Review (SAER) to investigate potential failures in her care. The girl, initially assessed and sent home, returned later that day, was diagnosed with influenza, and discharged again with at-home care instructions, only to pass away the

following day, prompting calls for accountability from New South Wales (NSW) officials and the community.

The girl, a kindergarten student at St Luke's Grammar School in Dee Why, was first brought to SCH's emergency department on Monday, where clinicians assessed and discharged her. She returned shortly after, receiving an influenza diagnosis and instructions for home care, according to a Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (SCHN) spokesperson. Her condition worsened, leading to her admission to NBH, where she died on Tuesday, August 5. NSW Police confirmed the death and are preparing a brief for the coroner. A SCHN spokesperson expressed condolences, stating, "SCHN is progressing an initial review into the patient's care while at the hospital," and will collaborate with the Northern Sydney Local Health District for a joint independent clinical governance process.

NSW Health Minister Ryan Park called the death "heartbreaking" and emphasized the need for answers, saying, "I want to understand how and why this tragedy has occurred, and the parents deserve answers." He acknowledged the emotional toll on hospital staff, noting, "I'm also mindful of how distressing these events are for staff, and I know they'll be impacted by this tragedy." The matter is under review through a joint SAER, a process to investigate serious clinical incidents, alongside a coronial inquest to ensure transparency. NSW Premier Chris Minns stressed the urgency of a thorough investigation, stating, "There clearly needs to be a full investigation. We want to make sure no other family is in this kind of situation."

NBH issued a statement expressing deep sadness: "Our heartfelt condolences go out to the child's family and loved ones during this incredibly difficult time." The hospital confirmed its participation in the joint independent review with SCHN, noting, "We will undertake the appropriate investigations in line with NSW Health policy." The review aims to identify any lapses in triage, diagnosis, or discharge protocols that may have contributed to the tragedy. Recent concerns about NBH, including a report highlighting deficiencies in its medical record system linked to another child's death in 2024, underscore the need for systemic improvements.

The girl was remembered by St Luke's Grammar School principal Geoff Lancaster as "bright, vivacious, kind, and free-spirited." He noted, "She was kind, had many friends, and loved her family, friends, and school." The school, devastated by the loss, is planning a memorial service and providing support to students, staff, and the family. The tragedy highlights the critical need for accurate clinical assessments and robust hospital protocols to prevent

such outcomes, with ongoing investigations expected to deliver answers and drive accountability.