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Dear Dr Mishra,

Outline Guidance for the provision of Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) out of hours (weekends and public holidays)

Thank you for inviting the GMC to comment on the outline guidance for the out of hours provision of Medical Certificates of Cause of Death (MCCD) where burial is required within 24 hours. Clarity about the new arrangements once the Certification of Death (Scotland) Act 2011 come into force next month will help doctors to be confident about their responsibilities and should help avoid unnecessary delays and adding to the distress of those close to the deceased.

In terms of the guidance itself, we would like to offer the following suggestions.

Page 2 – Provision of MCCDs by OOH doctors in a primary care setting.

The responsibility to provide MCCDs at weekends/public holidays could usefully be separated out from the rest of the text, for ease of reference. Although the relevant paragraph is highlighted in bold type, this key point (for which doctors are likely to be looking) is still somewhat buried in the text.

Page 3

- Doctors may find it useful here to have more detail about what is expected of them in practical terms – for example, when engaging with those close to the deceased. This is particularly important if, as suggested in the document, most doctors will not encounter this situation (the need for a swift burial) very frequently. In paragraph 84 of our guidance [Treatment and Care Towards The End of Life](#) we emphasise the importance of showing respect for and responding sensitively to the wishes and needs of the bereaved, and of being prepared to offer help and support for example,

by explaining where they can get information about or help with the administrative practicalities following the death.

- The guidance refers to two leaflets which the doctor should provide – one about the review process and one for Advance Registration. It may be helpful to append copies of these leaflets to the guidance, so that doctors referring to it can see what information they contain and use them to inform discussions with the bereaved.

Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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