

Brain unit broken

'Burnout' fix in patient-abuse report

A REPORT into the care of patients at a Caulfield Hospital unit, ordered after shocking footage emerged of a nurse abusing a man in his bed, says urgent funding is needed for staff development.

Hidden-camera footage taken on January 22 showed a male nurse grabbing Billy Aivaliotis by the throat in the specialist brain injury unit, then pushing him in the face.

After the *Herald Sun* revealed the incident, Health Minister Jill Hennessy ordered Safer Care Victoria to undertake a review of Alfred Health's acquired brain injury rehabilitation service at the hospital.

The experts who conducted the review made 26 recommendations, including: **GREATER** inclusion of patients and their families in care decisions; **BETTER** clinical leadership; **GIVING** personal alarms to staff in the unit; and **A REVISED** staff wellbeing and support program.

DAVID HURLEY

The report said: "The provision of employee assistance program services to nursing staff in the ABI unit is appropriate for major incidents.

"A more sustained program is required for the monitoring and management of staff stress, vicarious trauma and emotional wellbeing.

"Sustained exposure to occupational violence can lead to extreme consequences for staff such as burnout and eliciting violent behaviour themselves. "The exposure ABI unit staff have to occupational violence may have been a contributing factor to the incident that triggered this review."

Alfred Health issued a statement yesterday saying it accepted all the recommendations, and that they would be implemented by year's end.

"We are changing the way our clinical team escalates and acts on family feedback," it said, adding: "We were shocked by the inappropriate

treatment of a patient reported earlier this year.

"The improvements we are making ... will go a long way to ensuring this type of isolated incident does not happen again."

Victoria Police launched an investigation and has confirmed its probe continues.

The camera which captured the footage was hidden in a picture frame by Mr Aivaliotis' family, who said concerns they raised with hospital staff about his treatment by staff had fallen on deaf ears.

The nurse involved, in his 30s, was stood down just before the *Herald Sun* published details, and no longer works for Alfred Health.

Law firm Arnold Thomas and Becker, acting on behalf of Mr Aivaliotis and his family, is initiating civil proceedings against the hospital.

Mr Aivaliotis, 33, who was born with cerebral palsy, was struck by a vehicle on May 22 last year and suffered a significant brain injury.

david.hurley@news.com.au

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A new production of *West Side Story* will open in Melbourne next April.

THE Sharks and the Jets are coming back to town with a brand new production of *West Side Story* opening in Melbourne next April.

The acclaimed production, directed by Joey McKneely, who was a former pupil of original choreographer Jerome Robbins, will feature a cast of 32 performers.

One of the producers, Torben Brookman, described *West Side Story* as the perfect musical.

"It's everything you could ever want from a musical,"

CATHERINE LAMBERT

he said. "Incredible dancing, music and the greatest love story ever written."

Since opening on Broadway in 1957, the show has been performed widely around the world but this production is one of the most authentic.

"As Joey was in the show under Jerome Robbins, it features original Robbins' choreography and is very authentic," he said.

"It's topical while

remaining faithful to the original."

The costumes are lavish but the set is kept open to give full scope to the stunning dance sequences.

Since the much-publicised withdrawal of US star Sierra Boggess from a concert production of the show last year because of whitewashing fears, blind casting is sure to be an issue. *West Side Story* will be at the Arts Centre from April 6-18.

westsidestory.com.au