

Hotel-Dieu 'reckless,' inquest told

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Windsor Star

Tuesday, November 27, 2007

Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital's chief of medical staff was "reckless" in assuming in the spring of 2005 that Dr. Marc Daniel was mentally ill and that it was therefore inadvisable to confront him on his "destructive" workplace behaviour, a coroner's inquest heard Tuesday.

On his second day of testimony, Dr. Arthur Kidd said he and several other medical colleagues - none of whom had psychiatric training or qualifications - made the "presumption" that Daniel was mentally ill at the time of his February 2005 suicide attempt, and that he remained mentally incompetent for several months after that.



CREDIT: Dan Janisse, The Windsor Star
Dr. Art Kidd, Chief of Medical staff at the Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital exits the Ciociaro Club after testifying Monday at the Dupont/Daniels coroner's inquest.

When he was asked under cross-examination by Greg Monforton, representing murdered nurse Lori Dupont's family at the inquest, what type of mental illness Daniel suffered from, Kidd replied he was "not qualified" to say.

"That's my point," said Monforton. "Quite frankly, it was reckless to the extreme," he said of Kidd's diagnosis of Daniel. He said it established "the paradigm for everything that happened thereafter," including Daniel's killing of Dupont in November before taking his own life.

In an exchange that drew objections from lawyers representing Hotel-Dieu and other doctors and even from coroner Dr. Andrew McCallum, Monforton said Kidd and the hospital's "failure" to investigate the source of the surgical anesthetic used by Daniel in his earlier suicide attempt gave the anesthetist "licence and implicit encouragement" to use the same narcotic again eight months later.

Kidd agreed that incidents brought to his attention in the spring of 2005 represented breaches of an earlier agreement Daniel signed to abide by hospital policies, including its stated "zero tolerance" of workplace harassment.

Kidd testified he never confronted Daniel with any of the allegations made against the anesthetist, who was allowed to return to work on May 30, 2005.

Kidd said he relied on Daniel's psychiatrist Dr. Brian Burke to determine his patient's readiness to return to the OR, as well as the Ontario Medical Association's physician health program (PHP) in which Daniel had been enrolled. In previous testimony at the inquest, Burke testified he was never told of any bad behaviour on the part of Daniel, and Daniel's PHP overseers

testified they too were unaware of any disturbing incidents.

The inquest has heard that Hotel-Dieu's senior managers felt Daniel's behavioural problems could be treated while he was holding his hospital job.

"Dr. Daniel's behaviour was getting worse, it wasn't getting better?"

Monforton asked.

"Yes," Kidd replied.

"And the pattern of behaviour was escalating?" Monforton added.

"That seems a fair point," said Kidd.

Monforton said Burke's psychiatric evaluation of Daniel was only as good as the quality of information he was being given. He asked Kidd why he never conveyed to the psychiatrist one disturbing incident in which the doctor posted a note and compromising photo of Dupont on her vehicle in early April.

"It didn't occur to me," said Kidd.

Responding to a similar line of questioning during cross-examination by Ontario Nurses' Association lawyer Elizabeth McIntyre, Kidd said: "In retrospect, I certainly wish I had done something else."

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