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Your local health news | February/March 2016



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for Aged Care services p.2

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Board News

Message from the Chair – Ian Langdon

Time for reflection

The Gold Coast Hospital and Health Services Board has now been in existence for nearly four years, thus it is timely to reflect on the service changes and the achievements of our staff during this period.

The growth in the range of clinical services provided by Gold Coast Health has been astounding. New services such as radiation oncology, cardiac surgery, children's critical care unit, stem cell transplant unit, and many more now available previously required Gold Coast public patients to travel to Brisbane.

As a result of these new services plus underlying growth

in the capacity of our facilities and staff, we have seen an increase of annual funding from approximately \$800 million p.a. to \$1.2 billion. As a result, our staff numbers have increased to approximately 7,700.

Alongside the Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital the increased activity in our community health activities is evidenced by statistics such as 42,926 clinical occasions of services in Community Child Health, 4,409 maternity home visits and 4,294 one on one clinical occasions of service for school based youth health nurses at 17 Gold Coast state High Schools during 2014/15.

Despite an increase in emergency presentations of over 25 per cent during the past four years, Gold Coast Health has increased the proportion of patients being serviced in four hours from 53 per cent to 74 per cent.

There are many other equally impressive statistics and I encourage the community to access our most recent annual report online for full details. As Chair of Gold Coast Health I am proud of the progress brought about through the hard work of our staff and marvel at their dedication in sometimes very difficult circumstances.

Aged care services early intervention

Aged care patients on the Gold Coast can be confident that they are receiving contemporary, world class rehabilitation and aged care services as a new model of care is introduced from April.

Project Manager for the Reforming Aged Care and Rehab Services, Marissa Corcoran said patients will benefit from the changes. These include better first response services at the point of entry to healthcare delivered at Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital.

"Patients will welcome the new specialist rehabilitation and aged care teams that respond to patients when they first come in to hospital, as early as in the Emergency Department," she said.

"Many aged care patients will be seen in the Emergency Department by a specialist team who will assess their needs, and direct them immediately to the right place to receive care.

"This may be in a hospital ward, their own home or an aged care facility with the right level of clinical care in place."

There will be new and expanded services in the community for patients who need rehab and aged care services. Also there will be less need to transfer patients between wards and hospitals because specialist teams have been able to direct them to the right place when they are first admitted.



With early intervention and better coordination between GPs and hospitals, patients will see a vast difference in the way they receive care and the ability to help them to return home earlier, or receive the care that they need in their homes.



Clinical and support services staff will play a part in gaining Magnet Recognition

Gold Coast Health – a magnet for success

Gold Coast Health has embarked on the pathway to join an elite group of world-class health service organisations.

The Magnet Recognition Program is an international organisation credential that recognises nursing excellence in healthcare organisations. It is a highly prestigious award which only a small number of organisations internationally have attained.

Gold Coast Health Clinical Governance, Education and Research Executive Director Prof Marianne Vonau said Gold Coast Health which includes Gold Coast University Hospital, Robina Hospital and our community services, aims to become the first Magnet-designated health service in Australia.

“What will distinguish the Gold Coast approach to Magnet is that we are taking an inter-professional approach,” she said.

“This means we are expanding the principles and philosophy of Magnet to incorporate not only the nursing stream (which normally achieves this recognition), but also the clinical and support services teams that work together to provide safe, quality care to our consumers.

“The strict requirements of Magnet recognition and the prestige this entails, will improve patient care and attract and retain the very best healthcare professionals.

“That’s a benefit for everyone in the region.”

As part of the requirements for Magnet, Gold Coast Health will change the annual patient experience surveys to three monthly starting in February 2016. Health consumers who have been an inpatient or outpatient in one of our hospitals/clinics will be invited to participate. Feedback provided through these surveys will enable us to improve service delivery.



Graduate nurses join ranks of health service

Opportunity beckons for 142 graduate nurses who began their careers at Gold Coast Health in January.

The elite cohort arrived at an exciting time in the professional development of nurses and midwives across the health service.

Rebecca Bennett said gaining a 12-month graduate nursing post with Gold Coast Health was the ultimate start to her career.

“My favourite part will be caring for my patients at their weakest moment and being able to make a difference to their lives,” she said.

Rajalaxmi Subbarayan, a mother-of-three, said starting her nursing career at Gold Coast Health was a dream come true.

“I struggled a lot with full-time study, part-time work and family. After all the efforts I am now proud to be a nurse and part of the team,” the Griffith University graduate said.

These graduates will be a part of delivering quality front line patient care while also having the opportunity to continue their learning and development.

Robina Hospital introduces specialised emergency care model

Robina Hospital's Emergency Department has cut waiting times by introducing a Clinical Decision Unit that diverts patients who require a longer stay to a separate area of the hospital.

The \$4.4 million upgrade was in response to increased demand for services at Robina Hospital is the largest funding commitment since its expansion in 2009.

Gold Coast Health Diagnostic, Emergency and Medical Services Clinical Director Dr Mark Forbes said about 5000 people presented at Robina Hospital each month, putting it on par with the Princess Alexandra Hospital, a tertiary facility in Brisbane.

“With GCUH's growing reputation as a Trauma Centre, Robina Hospital's Emergency Department has a more important role than ever to play in our health service,” he said.

“Our Emergency staff are understandably excited at this redevelopment of their unit and, best of all, our patients will be the ultimate beneficiaries.”

A specialised Clinical Decision Unit allows patients who require a longer stay in Emergency to be streamed to an inpatient area, providing greater comfort and opening up space for more seriously injured patients.

The six-bed unit has helped drive a 6 per cent increase in the number of Emergency patients being seen within nationally recommended wait times.

As part of the funding boost, a \$400,000 redevelopment of the ED triage area will be carried out to support an Early Assessment and Streaming Zone where senior clinicians will conduct early decision-making on patients.

Managing your chronic disease

People with one or more chronic diseases are now actively managing their health and quality of life through learning to self-manage their condition. The Gold Coast Health Chronic Disease Wellness program is for people in the community who want to take control of their condition and live a fuller life.

Coordinator Chronic Disease Management, Rose Coster said their service caters to people with diabetes, chronic kidney disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) along with high blood pressure and heart or blood vessel disease.

“We work in partnership with the person and their GP to help people understand their condition, recognise changes in their symptoms and feel confident in knowing how to respond,” she said.

“People can get help to reduce their risk of complications, to stay well enough to keep out of hospital as well as support to recognise when they need to go to hospital.”

Current consumers using the service are its biggest advocates. Program user James Ross said symptoms can creep up on you if you are not careful and fully aware of your own health.

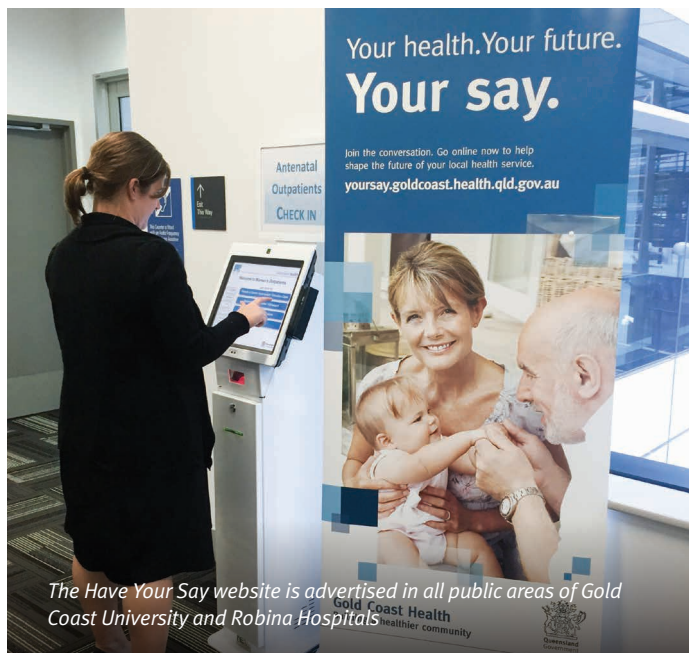


“It's most important to start with your GP as they are best placed to check you annually via blood tests to make sure your diabetes is not getting worse or causing other problems like kidney or heart disease.

“Attending the Chronic Disease Program regularly has been great to give me confidence to manage my diabetes, keep me focused and on track.”

Should you or a family member or friend need help with managing chronic conditions contact your GP to make a referral to the Chronic Disease Wellness Program using the referral templates on www.healthyGC.com.au. For further queries contact the Central Intake Unit Ph 1300 668 936.

Consumer feedback improves your health service



Our recently launched community consultation hub **Your health. Your future. Your say.**, gives the Gold Coast community the opportunity to provide input to help Gold Coast Health continue to evolve into a world class healthcare organisation.

Senior Director Communication and Engagement Amanda Noonan said the online hub offers opportunities throughout the year to bring the health consumer voice to health service planning and delivery.

“By providing input on key strategic documents and initiatives consumer and community members can help shape the future of their health service,” she said.

“There is currently an opportunity for community to have input into our ten year plan to provide world class services and every piece of input will be evaluated.

“People can go online now to yoursay.health.qld.gov.au and help us to deliver more accessible and effective health services for the Gold Coast community.”

On the same online hub you are also invited to tell us about your recent healthcare treatment with us. We want to hear what your experience was like, what we did well and where we may have an opportunity to improve our service. Your feedback can and will make a difference.

Nurse Navigators to strengthen frontline services

Complex paediatric patients will be the first to benefit when Gold Coast Health welcomes its initial Nurse Navigators

The experienced nurses are part of a commitment to strengthen and increase frontline services.

Gold Coast Health Professor of Nursing and Midwifery Dr Anita Bamford-Wade said the first five Nurse Navigators would be assigned to paediatrics at Gold Coast University Hospital.

Nurse Navigators, a system which has been successfully implemented overseas, will enable seamless movement for patients between home and the hospital.

“The Nurse Navigators won’t necessarily be in the hospital all the time,” Dr Bamford-Wade said.

“They will be meeting with parents and families in the community and at GP practices.

“These will be the complex cases. Often we think it’s the elderly and the aged but these days we have a lot of children with complexities – there are children with cancer, cystic fibrosis, neurological conditions, epilepsy, diabetes and those requiring surgery, as well as complex babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.”

Fifty Nurse Navigators are set to be employed on the Gold Coast in the next four years, with the initiative designed to get people through the system quicker and to prevent readmissions.

Dr Bamford-Wade predicted the rollout of the program would lead to more consistent and personal contact from nurses and the closer case management could result in families requiring fewer trips to the Emergency Department and readmissions for children.

Patient positives

Patient One

I want to give my heartfelt and sincere thanks to all the staff who looked after me when I was admitted to emergency on Saturday morning with a serious eye injury from the surf. I recall Kerry the wonderful nurse in emergency who kept me in good spirits and made me feel really cared for. I won’t forget her kindness (even if she had to cut off my Calvin Klein dress! we joked about this). She is a great credit to your hospital and brilliant at her job.

Lindsay the competent and calm ophthalmologist who checked my retinas, kept me well informed and bandaged me up... thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Patient Two

I am writing about my extraordinary experience in the Gold Coast University Hospital last week. I suffered a brain aneurysm. After initial treatment, I was transferred to ICU. My treatment here was extraordinary and the same continued when I was moved to a general ward. I have never been in hospital in my life so I did not know what to expect. You read or see reports about hospital “horror” stories so I was unsure what would happen.

Any negative thoughts I may have harboured have been totally blown away. The Gold Coast University Hospital is, in my opinion, one of the world’s great medical facilities. Other facilities may have better equipment (doubtful) but there is no question that no other hospital or medical facility has better doctors, nurses or ancillary staff than GCUH. These extraordinary individuals have set the bar for every other health professional to aspire to.

Watchhouse team claims top nursing prize

Gold Coast Health will be looking for back-to-back wins in the annual 102.9 Hot Tomato Gold Coast Nurse of the Year Award.

The service's Southport Watchhouse nurses won the accolade in its inaugural year in 2015.

The team of six was recognised for their dedication to a Gold Coast Health research program that is trialling the value of providing emergency nursing care for people in police watch houses.

Emergency Department Nurse Katie East couldn't believe the result when she took the phone call from the local radio station call on behalf of the watch house nurse team.

"Thank you for getting the word out about our program and appreciating what we do. I'm actually blown away. Some of my best mates are in the competition, sorry guys!" she said.

"Without a doubt it's put some smiles on some faces," Katie said.

Gold Coast Health staff dominated the competition in 2015.

Among the monthly winners were Shelley Christie from the Gold Coast University Hospital's (GCUH) Emergency Department, Sandra Roberts from Robina Hospital's Palliative Care Unit, Robina Hospital's Lisa Kiddle (Loopy), Matthew Scott from GCUH ED, and GCUH Assistant in Nursing Kym Watson.

Nominations are now open for the 2016 Gold Coast Nursing Awards. Monthly winners will go into the running to be named the overall winner. Visit <http://www.mycg.com.au/gold-coast-nursing-awards/>



ED Nurse Katie East (right), with researcher Julia Crilly, is one of the six Southport Watchhouse nurses who won the overall prize in the 102.9 Hot Tomato 2015 Gold Coast Nursing Awards.



(L-R): Sue Stevenson Clinical Nurse, Belinda Gray CNC, Suzie Koenig Clinical Nurse, Jackie Atkinson Clinical Nurse, Sonja Hewitt Clinical Nurse.

School's never out for our youth health nurses

Over the past 15 years, Gold Coast Health School Based Youth Health program nurses have been involved in new initiatives and partnerships to improve the health and wellbeing of youth up to 17 years.

Projects such as Mind Matters, the Bully Buster initiative that won an Education Queensland Award and recently as the State pilot group for Project Booyah – a Queensland Police initiative winning the 2015 State Industry Award, are all fine examples of the collaborative work underway.

This service was set up to address increases in youth substance abuse and youth suicide in the 1990s. The primary focus is on young people and individual consultations and group information sessions are provided in line with school curriculum requirements.

School Based Youth Health Nurse Suzie Koenig said they provide health and wellbeing information on a variety of topics.

"As many of our students are walk-ins needing help to address a current issue, a day in the life of a school based nurse is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you are going to get," she said.

"Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, sexual health, healthy growth and development, exercise and healthy eating, hygiene, feeling unhappy or stressed, self-harm, grief and loss and other mental health issues are recurring themes."

The nurses work alongside teachers in the classroom setting and also provide services to school staff, parents and carers.



InFocus with Managing Director Integrated Care Helen Cooper

How and when did you start with GCH? I started working at Robina Hospital in 2000 when it was St Vincent's and transferred to the Health Service in July 2002 when Robina Hospital came under the ownership Queensland Government public health service.

What is your current role and what do you like the most about it? My current position is the Managing Director for Integrated Care. There are so many things about this role that I really

love. We are creating an exciting system of health care that will benefit so many people on the Gold Coast. I really enjoy the innovation, development and interactions with hospital staff and general practice. Overall what I enjoy the most about my role is having the great fortune to be working alongside a very talented, committed and highly performing team that are 'Integrated Care'.

In your current role what is the one big take home message you see influencing yourself and the people that use our service? I believe that there are many alternatives for many people to receive care other than in a hospital or acute setting. However at this present time the system does not allow for this to easily happen. My second thought here is that I really believe that we could be using General Practice for more of our ailments/illnesses than we may realise, rather than relying on the hospital service itself.

Local shoppers help sick children stand and walk

In August this year almost \$50,000 was raised through the Woolworths Wall Token campaign to help sick children on the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast Health Foundation used some of these funds to purchase crucial paediatric physiotherapy equipment for young patients at the Gold Coast University Hospital.

Tiny Kaiarna-Blessing (pictured) and other children like her now have access to this new specialised equipment to improve their mobility and treatment.

Kaiarna has a neurological condition that causes her to have seizures and strong muscle spasms. These spasms make her body stiffen and distort her posture—making it difficult and uncomfortable for her to sit in a normal pram or highchair. So, the Foundation purchased a \$5,000 neo-stroller specifically designed to help children like Kaiarna.

Senior Physiotherapist in paediatrics Claire, said her team had always wished for specialised equipment like this stroller for many years.

“We are so grateful that families like Kaiarna’s can now benefit from trialling it before considering purchasing their own.

“The neostroller has specific supportive pads and straps which mean that once mum has loosened her muscles through massage and movement, Kaiarna can maintain a good posture using the stroller.”

This equipment makes Kaiarna less dependent on her mum holding her, giving mum her hands free to hold toys, play with and feed her baby girl. It also maintains good body alignment will help prevent spine and hip problems as well as promote good breathing patterns and safer feeding.



Senior Physiotherapist in paediatrics
Claire Spillman and baby Kaiarna



New family assistance program unites families and loved ones in crisis situations

This year the Foundation launched a family assistance program to help people who are struggling financially with loved ones in hospital.

It can be a desperate situation for families suddenly finding themselves in a crisis situation and needing accommodation, transport and parking.

The pilot program has already helped a number of families, like Sharon and John who live on the Sunshine Coast. John was urgently air-lifted to Gold Coast University Hospital in November following a serious motorbike accident in Northern NSW.

John suffered severe multiple chest injuries and spent three weeks in ICU. Sharon said she wanted to be by his side every day given the severity of the situation.

“I doubt John would have recovered so quickly without me being there to comfort him,” she said.

“Without the Foundation’s accommodation support I would have been unable to remain on the Gold Coast, thank you so much.”

The Foundation’s Family Assistance Service will become a major focus of future fundraising appeals. It is hoped there will be enough funding to allow the service to continue and grow over the coming years as the population and number of trauma patients presenting at Gold Coast University Hospital increases.



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Gold Coast Health proves attractive for intern doctors

Gold Coast Health's growing reputation for innovation, research and cutting-edge training is proving a lure for medical graduates.

Ninety intern doctors started their careers at Gold Coast University and Robina hospitals in January, once again making the Gold Coast home to one of Queensland's biggest intern intakes.

This intake included 62 graduates from Griffith University (37 interns) and Bond University (25) – as well as 28 interns from across Australia.

Executive Director of Clinical Governance, Education and Research Professor Marianne Vonau said it was the third year in a row the health service had welcomed such a large number of interns.

"With an intake rate just behind metropolitan hospitals such as Princess Alexandra and Royal Brisbane and Women's hospitals, we are playing a vital role in training and development the state's medical workforce," she said.

Professor Vonau said GCUH was one of only four hospitals in Queensland that offered interns the More Learning for Interns in Emergency medicine (MoLIE) program.

"The MoLIE program allows every intern completing their compulsory Emergency term to receive eight hours of non-clinical service each week to engage in pure learning from consultants," she said.



New interns take part in a cannulation workshop under the watchful eye of Kathrynne McKaskill.



Staff in the paediatric ward in front of one of the colourful new murals

In the jungle the quiet jungle

If these walls could talk jungle sounds could be heard through the children's ward at Gold Coast University Hospital.

Colourful murals – themed jungle fever, enchanted forest and under the sea – now adorn three walls in the paediatric inpatient unit.

Staff members say the artworks have brightened up the ward. The water-themed wall behind the day stay admissions counter has provided the perfect backdrop for Warwick, the ward's resident fish, who was presented to the unit by a staff member who moved to the outback Queensland town.

Acting Nurse Unit Manager Catherine Walker said the wall art was the first stage in adding colour to the children's inpatient unit.

Stage two will involve wall decorations in treatment rooms.

"We are also looking to get a local artist to do some of the designs for the next run in the ward and Children's Critical Care Unit," Ms Walker said.

More than just pretty pictures – the picture in the lounge sitting area has an interactive component. Patients and their families are able to use a worksheet and complete activities such as finding pine cones in the wall picture.

Healthcare plans – your link to peace of mind

Advance Care Planning gives you a say in your healthcare decisions. It allows you to make decisions now and contemplate who could make these for you should you not be able to do so.

Clinicians, family members and significant others can all benefit by having a clear understanding of your needs which means less anxiety, stress and confusion should you be in this situation through accident or long term illness.

Advance Care Planning Facilitator Leonie Howard-Jones said that making these plans while you are fit and healthy is a good idea

while you can still participate in your own decision making.

"It is particularly useful for elderly people to make known their preferences for care," she said.

"As our population ages and people are living longer with multiple and often complex conditions leading to frailty in old age, this planning process can help immensely.

"As an ACP facilitator it is gratifying to know that the channels of communication around death and dying, that are often difficult to broach, are being brought into the open."

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