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Board News

Message from the Chair – Ian Langdon

Newly appointed Health Minister Cameron Dick has removed the Elective Surgery Wait Time guarantee and replaced it with a 98 per cent requirement to perform Category 1 surgeries within recommended clinical times and 95 per cent for Categories 2 and 3. This change is accompanied by increased funding to accelerate the pace that patients on the 'wait list' receive an appointment for a specialist.

Remember the Elective Surgery Wait Time only becomes active after a patient has seen a specialist. It is a sound and logical approach. The change introduces a balance that maintains a tight discipline around delivering elective surgery within clinically recommended timeframes while reducing the time taken to add a patient to the Elective Surgery Wait List in the first place.

Over the next three months an additional \$30 million

has been allocated across all Queensland regions to support this policy extension and as more patients see a specialist earlier, the numbers entering the Elective Surgery Wait List will invariably increase.

Taking into account the increased service demand on the Gold Coast, along with the setting of the new service targets of 98 per cent (Category 1) and 95 per cent (Categories 2 and 3), the challenge will be to use our resources wisely or we will not

meet Ministerial expectations.

Based on our recent performance I am confident our patients will benefit from our ability to achieve the challenging targets. Gold Coast Health will need to maintain the improvements made in recent years and extend that improvement into the 'wait for wait' group using the extra funding to achieve this policy objective. It is a sound and balanced approach for driving improved health service to the community.

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Cover Image: Trauma Service Nurse Kate Dale and Coombabah State High School student Chelsea Dennis reflect on the launch of the P.A.R.T.Y program (see page 3).

Mental Health Commissioner praises ground-breaking initiative

One of the state's leading mental health figures has applauded the Gold Coast Health Board's commitment to ensuring the sensitive subject is considered everyone's business.

Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Dr Lesley van Schoubroek was a special guest at a day-long assessment of Mental Health Services, which saw an unprecedented number of Mental Health staff present to and participate in sessions with the Board and Gold Coast Health's Executive Management Team in a bid to find ways to build on the stellar care they provide.

"It was great for me to see the Board members beginning to understand the challenges of responding to mental health, alcohol and drug issues, and encouraging to hear the importance they are placing on mental health being everyone's business," Dr van Schoubroek said.

Board Chair Ian Langdon, who instigated the event, said: "Having strived to gain a better understanding of the mental health sector, I appreciate that it requires frequent discussion as new initiatives emerge and constant dialogue on how resources are allocated."

Gold Coast Health's Mental Health Services makes 140,000 community contacts each year, with 6500 people seeking treatment or help annually.



Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Dr Lesley van Schoubroek (third from left) with Board Chair Ian Langdon and Mental Health and Integrated Care Clinical Director Dr Kathryn Turner and General Manager Karlyn Chettleburgh.



Heart-felt reunion for one-year anniversary

More than 42 million heart beats later, Gold Coast University Hospital's first cardiac surgery patient has been reunited with the doctor who changed his life.

In February last year, James Boyce became the first person to have heart surgery in Gold Coast Health's new cardiac service.

A year down the track, more than 200 heart patients have followed in his footsteps.

Mr Boyce and Director of Cardiac Surgery Dr Ben Anderson met again in the theatre where the surgery was carried out 12 months earlier.

Director of Cardiac Surgery Dr Ben Anderson catches up with GCUH's first heart surgery patient, James Boyce.

"I'll turn 69 in a couple of weeks and I feel excellent," Mr Boyce said. "My quality of life has improved 100 per cent and I just feel great."

Dr Anderson said providing a one-stop-shop service meant families no longer had to spend up to a week in Brisbane as their loved ones recovered from surgery.

"We provide a complete care package from initial stress tests through to surgery, post-operative care and rehabilitation after they go home," he said.

"We'd planned for about 190 patients for the first year but we saw 221 (and) looking at our growth, we'll be around 300-plus for next year ... we had to build up quicker over the year and we've taken on more staff and we're getting more beds."

PARTY aiming to save teenage lives

Gold Coast Health is throwing a 'party' every month in a bid to save the lives of high school students.

The P.A.R.T.Y. program (Prevent Alcohol Risk-related Trauma in Youth), which has launched at Gold Coast University Hospital, exposes local school students to the harsh reality of the catastrophic results of risky behaviour.

The teenagers hear from facial reconstruction surgeons, see the stainless steel bolts and shafts used to tie broken bones together, meet patients whose lives have been shattered and listen to relatives who have lost children and siblings.

In a simulation room they also perform resuscitation on a medical dummy and have to decide when to stop, before placing the dummy in a body bag and breaking the news to a senior nurse playing the role of the victim's mother.

Acting Director Trauma Service Don Campbell said the program was designed to bring students face-to-face with cases that medical staff deal with all too often.

"There's no doubt this is a confronting experience for the kids," he said.

"We want to make them realise they're not bullet-proof and

show them how their lives, and those of their families and friends, can be destroyed in an instant by risky behaviour."



High school students are being exposed to the reality of risk-taking behaviour.

Gold Coast Health has welcomed 135 nursing graduates.



Nursing grads come aboard

Meet the latest cohort of men and women who have embraced the opportunity to care for their local community.

Gold Coast Health welcomed 135 new nursing graduates earlier this year, with the intake to work in a range of clinical units including mental health, perioperative and specialist medical areas across Carrara Health Precinct and Robina and Gold Coast University Hospitals.

Professor of Nursing and Midwifery Dr Anita Bamford-Wade said about 600 students had placed Gold Coast Health as their first job preference.

“We interviewed 300 (and) the selection process was quite

rigorous,” she said. “We have some very bright young people coming in – they’re inspiring.”

One of those is Ben McGarry, who was inspired to become a nurse while travelling in developing countries.

“I saw many things that were disheartening and really challenging,” he said. “That prompted me to come back to Australia ... and undertake a nursing degree, which I thought was the best way I could reach my goals of helping those in need.

“I topped my degree, I was number one academically, so I’ve done everything I can to prepare myself for a nursing profession. Now I can only work to build upon that knowledge and learn as I go.”

A chance to shine

A growing presence on the national and international stage is further proof of Gold Coast Health’s evolution from a regional healthcare service to major tertiary health provider.

As well as providing safe and quality care to its patients, the health service is increasingly hosting high-profile guest speakers and symposiums and seeing the impressive Gold Coast University Hospital act as a backdrop for international conferences.

Among the major events that will unfold in coming months are:

Inaugural Gold Coast Health Nursing and Midwifery Symposium (4-5 September): more than 200 nurses, midwives and dignitaries from across the country are expected to attend one of the biggest events in the service’s history. Endorsed by Professor of Nursing and Midwifery Dr Anita Bamford-Wade, the symposium will focus on innovation in nursing care. Visit www.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoasthealth/html/events/150310-nursing-symposium.asp

Congress World Federation of Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology (9-13 November): in a major coup for the city, the Gold Coast won the right to host a biennial event that will be attended by about 1000 of the world’s leading neuroradiologists. Gold Coast Health’s Dr Hal Rice and Dr Laetitia de Villiers were the driving forces in securing the congress and said winning the bid was an endorsement for the work being done at GCUH. For more information visit www.wfitn.com.au

Churchill Fellowship for Britain

One of Gold Coast Health’s leaders in maternity has been awarded a prestigious Churchill Fellowship. Hazel Brittain, Acting Service Director Women’s and Children’s Services, will use the opportunity to visit Canada, the UK and New Zealand to visit research centres and services that have a proven track record of providing woman/family-centred continuity of care.

Get shot this flu season

Gold Coasters are reminded of the importance of being vaccinated as another flu season approaches. This year’s influenza shot has been delayed due to two of the strains of the vaccine having had to change, with it expected to roll out in Queensland from mid-April.

Cry for help answered

Gold Coast Health answered the call of its northern cousins following the devastating impact of Tropical Cyclone Marcia. When Queensland Health’s Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs branch requested volunteers to fly to Rockhampton to support residents and fellow health workers, about 40 Gold Coast Health staff put their hands up, with eight nurses ultimately flying north.

Help shape your health service

Gold Coast community members have the opportunity to shape their local health service via input and feedback opportunities. Read the latest framework that supports this participation and make a comment if you feel we have or have not hit the mark. See the Get Involved webpage at <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/goldcoasthealth/getinvolved.asp> and make a difference.

Funding boost to help meet Emergency demand

The Gold Coast is now home to Queensland’s busiest Emergency Department, with additional funding having been secured to help meet the unprecedented demand.

Up to 8000 emergency patients each month are passing through the doors of Gold Coast University Hospital, 1500 more than any other ED in Queensland, with the massive increase seeing it secure an extra \$3.4 million to boost services.

Robina Hospital has also experienced a surge in presentations, with an average of 5000 monthly patients putting it on a par with Brisbane’s Princess Alexandra Hospital.

Service Director Brett Sellars said there had been a 14 per cent increase in emergency patients since GCUH opened in September 2013.

“Very few hospitals in the world have experienced the surge in demand that we have and this funding boost recognises that,” he said.

“Most importantly, it will allow us to employ more people and introduce new models of care to alleviate the impact on both our staff and the public.”

An increased capacity to care for the most serious of traumas has also contributed to a massive spike in the number of Category 1 patients treated at GCUH’s ED.

Category 1 patients have more than doubled since the move to GCUH, with the team treating about 150 such cases a month. The introduction of expanded tertiary services and having its own helipad has also seen an increase in trauma presentations from neighbouring regions.

“We are also aiming to be accredited as a Level 1 Trauma Centre, which will allow GCUH to benchmark itself against other major Australian trauma centres,” Mr Sellars said.



Clinical Nurses Matt Pekin and Mel Arnott work in Queensland’s busiest Emergency Department.

In focus with Dr Faye Jordan

I didn’t study medicine until I was 36. My eldest daughter was in Grade 1 and after working as a speech pathologist, I decided the time was right to enter medical school. I ended up having a gap year when my second child was born and eventually graduated in 2003 when my daughters were 10 and one.

I work as a registrar in the Emergency Department at Gold Coast University Hospital and I learn something from every patient who walks through the door. Regardless of their medical condition, each and every one teaches me something – about medicine, about life, about myself, about the world we live in.

The worst thing is when I’m unable to make some impact on a patient’s situation, being unable to connect meaningfully with them. Obviously we can’t always cure or fix their problems but most times we can impact some change, even if just to allow a patient to feel valued.

I’ve shaved my head for the Leukaemia Foundation’s World’s Greatest Shave each year for the past nine years, raising almost \$50,000. During my training as an oncology registrar, shaving my head just seemed so easy compared to the journeys my patients and their families were enduring.

Local doctor steps into Ebola hot zone



Dr John Gerrard, who responded to the Ebola crisis in Africa

For Gold Coast Health's Dr John Gerrard, treating Ebola patients in Africa was 'the ultimate challenge' for an infectious diseases physician.

"It was surreal. I don't want to overstate it, but it was quite an apocalyptic vision. It was very confronting," said the Director of Infectious Diseases, who recently spent six weeks in Sierra Leone establishing an Ebola treatment unit with other Australian clinicians.

"For someone like me, this is like the holy grail ... when we arrived at the end of November, we were in the worst affected city, in the worst affected country, in the worst ever recorded epidemic of the most lethal communicable disease described.

"It all looked a bit hopeless and no one could really be certain that the intervention we were participating in would achieve its goals, but it now appears the intervention is stopping the epidemic and there is increasing evidence that it has saved many thousands of lives."

Dr Gerrard recently delivered a presentation to Gold Coast Health colleagues about his experiences and recommended other clinicians take up similar challenges.

"I think if you have the chance to do something in life that is your ultimate challenge, even if it's a bit dangerous, do whatever you can to take it because you won't regret it," he said.

He also spoke about the intense personal challenge of working in such an environment.

"You're so focused on the job and the experience is so overwhelming it sort of washes over you, but then you'll see something you can personally identify with and that's when it really hits you," Dr Gerrard said.

"For me, it was when I saw kids the same age as my own children. Suddenly it was no longer a clinical, unemotional job. Suddenly it was personal.

"This was the most intense and complex emotional experience of my life. It's impossible not to be changed by it in some way."

Dr Gerrard said he was grateful to his colleagues at Gold Coast Health for supporting him to go to Sierra Leone at such short notice over the busy Christmas period.

Helping mums and bubs in need

A commitment to ensuring the emotional and psychological wellbeing of not only mums-to-be but their babies is the driving force behind Gold Coast Health's Perinatal and Infant Mental Health service.

Working with women who have an established mental illness or at risk of developing one during pregnancy or post-birth, the team aims to ensure the bond between mothers and their newborns is not impacted by mental illness.

"We all know how important that bond is but maternal mental illness can directly affect a mother's responsiveness and sensitivity during interactions with her baby," Service Director Jennifer Sands said.

"By intervening, we are not only providing support to the woman but potentially stopping a childhood issue from developing."

The Perinatal and Infant Mental Health service works with women from preconception through pregnancy and up to 36 months postpartum.

Among the issues addressed during pregnancy are an expectant mother's antenatal care, nutrition and relationships, including those with her partner and other children.

The program was enhanced last year by the appointment of a specialist Infant and Perinatal Registrar, which has allowed the service to engage even more people in need.

Patient positives

Patient 1

March 2015

My nine-year-old grandson attended GC Uni Hospital last week for a small op (and) we met the most amazing and professional people. They put him, my daughter and myself at ease. To Nakita and Michelle for their bad jokes, Sean the 'gas guy' and those wonderful volunteer angels – thank you.

Patient 2

9 March 2015

Please convey my heartfelt thanks to the doctor and staff who looked after me (at the Emergency Department) ... it is great to know that Robina Hospital has such nice, dedicated and helpful staff considering the pressure they are put under from generally a population of sheep, drunks and high-testosterone young blokes at the weekend.

Patient 3

16 February 2015

I would like to enquire about any (job) opportunities you may have at your hospital ... I was recently admitted to your hospital and while I was there I received amazing service and felt comfortable and secure, and I would love to be part of something like that.

Wish-granting business

First National Broadbeach may be in the real estate business but it's their business of making equipment wishes come true that brought smiles to the faces of staff and patients in the Children's Ambulatory Service Unit.

A new portable Electrocardiogram (ECG) machine is helping measure heart rhythm in small or unsettled children – a vital first step in assessing heart palpitations and arrhythmias that can cause the heart to pump less effectively.

Having a portable machine makes for a much smoother and faster clinic experience for young patients and their families. Thanks to team fundraising events, staff donations and sales commission, Principal Pam Bayles and her team have donated close to \$16,000 to the Foundation during the past 12 months.



A new ECG machine is benefiting our youngest patients.

Expert local care means less travel

More than 400 patients and their families have been cared for by the Children's Critical Care team at Gold Coast University Hospital since the Unit opened a year ago – and your community support is helping provide them with major pieces of equipment.

The most recent donation was a transport monitor that supports safe transfer of the most critical young patients between hospital units and ambulance delivery.

Extra equipment such as this is helping the Unit make a huge difference to the lives of Gold Coast families and, as Director Dr Luregn Schlapbach explained, its opening saved 170 children from enduring the emotional and financial turmoil of travelling to Brisbane for treatment during the past year. Instead, only 25 had to make the trip north.

"We are able to treat children early rather than wait several hours for transfers to Brisbane hospitals and for families to stay close to home during a difficult time," he said.



Dr Phil Sargent and Registered Nurse Irene McDermott with the new transport monitor.

Double the projects, double the impact

On behalf of patients, their families and Gold Coast Health's dedicated medical staff, the Foundation thanks you for helping make a real difference to health care in your home community.

\$600,000

towards new equipment, research and grants since July 2014

35 health education grants and scholarships awarded locally

20 research projects

41 equipment and refurbishment projects

Entertainment plus

The 2015/2016 Entertainment™ Book is on its way and buying your copy through Gold Coast Hospital Foundation helps support vital medical projects to give patients the best health care.

Take advantage of the fantastic 50 per cent off and two-for-one offers from many of the best restaurants, cafes, attractions, accommodation, travel and much more. Pre-order your book today to receive an extra page of vouchers. Simply visit www.gchfoundation.org.au or phone (07) 5594 6986.

Big party for one of our littlest patients



Jai Gonce – aka little Jack Sparrow - celebrated his 100-day milestone at GCUH's Newborn Care Unit with the help of his family and nurses.

Not all babies get a party to celebrate their 100-day birthday. Then again, not all babies require the specialised care Gold Coast University Hospital's Newborn Care Unit provides.

In a growing tradition, little Jai Gonce, who was born at an incredible 25 weeks and one day, is the latest bub to have a 100-day birthday bash organised by the wonderful nursing staff who care for him.

His parents, Jason and Calie, and big sister, Aurelia, arrived at Gold Coast University Hospital to find his room had been decorated in a pirate theme, with Jack Sparrow posters, pirate hats and photos of their little man wearing a skull-and-crossbones bandanna.

With last year's addition of Neonatal Intensive Care to Gold Coast Health's Newborn Care Unit, Director Dr Peter Schmidt said more babies were spending their first 100 days at the hospital and staff were determined to ensure such milestones were celebrated.

"It's just another way of trying to make the unit that little less clinical and a little bit more like home," he said.

"We know how tough it is for the families. Clearly having your baby in hospital for several months is a huge thing to deal with and that's why we want to celebrate these milestones.

"These days are also important for our staff. We get to know the babies and families really well and while it's a special occasion for them, our staff also get to celebrate being part of their journey."

GCUH's Newborn Care Unit, which is equipped to look after babies born prematurely at 26 weeks or higher, is now home to eight Neonatal Intensive Care cots and 20 Special Care Nursery Cots.

Who's your nurse of the year?

Gold Coasters are being invited to pay tribute to the nurses and midwives who have touched their lives.

Nominations are now open for the Gold Coast Health/Rotary Nurse of the Year, a people's choice award that allows members of the public to say thanks for a job well done.

Nomination forms are available in the foyers at Gold Coast University Hospital, Robina Hospital or Carrara Health Centre or by emailing robinarotary@gmail.com or phoning 5569 2335. Nominations close 5pm on 2 May.

A changing skyline

Demolition of the old Gold Coast Hospital has reached a milestone, with the hospital's iconic chimney stack brought safely to the ground.

The chimney stack, which stood 16m above the roof of Block A and has dominated the Southport skyline for years, was removed by the skilled demolition team in a controlled fashion.

Demolition of Blocks B and C is now the focus of the demolition team, with the aim of demolishing all the above-ground structure before the end of April. Both towers are expected to be completely demolished to ground level by the end of June.

Total remediation of the site is expected to be completed by late-2015, with demolition of the site being managed responsibly to ensure minimal disruption to the surrounding community and businesses. Independent and regular air and dust monitoring is continuing.

Keep up-to-date on all the demolition news by emailing majorprojectsoffice@dsdip.qld.gov.au to subscribe to regular updates or visiting www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/gold-coast-hospital-site



Demolition of the old hospital is continuing.

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