

Patient-centered care





GP maternity alignment to strengthen ties with Metro North hospitals

A new Maternity GP Alignment Program has been established for General Practitioners (GPs) who provide shared care for women planning to birth within Metro North birthing facilities including Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH), Redcliffe and Caboolture Hospitals.

Approximately 40 per cent of women giving birth in public birthing facilities receive antenatal care through GP maternity shared care arrangements.

Women's and Newborn Services at RBWH, in partnership with Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local, and in collaboration with other Hospital and Health Services, have responded to government commitment to support the need for robust clinical pathways between GPs and hospital facilities.

In February 2014, the program team collaborated with the Mater Health Service, Metro South Hospital and Health Service and Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local to map, customise and develop a suitable program. A steering committee and working groups were established consisting of clinical and consumer representatives.

The aim of the program is to align community and hospital care while strengthening partnerships between GPs and the public hospital system.

Women who are pregnant or who are planning a pregnancy and choose a GP shared care model will experience improved process efficiencies and safer, more effective care.

Resources have been developed to:

- inform GPs at the point of care
- face-to-face workshops hosted by all three birthing facilities enabling education delivery and information exchange
- capture GPs learning needs by means of workshop pre and post knowledge assessment and evaluation.

The workshop has been accredited by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners for 40 Category One Active Learning Module points. Approximately 40 GPs attended the first workshop, which was hosted at RBWH.





Above: Women's and Newborn Services celebrate the launch of the Eligible Private Practice Midwives Model of Care.

New midwifery care model first in Brisbane

An exciting new midwifery model offers more choice to northside families. Women who are booked to give birth at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) are now able to choose to see an accredited private midwife for their maternity.

This agreement is the first of its kind for public hospitals in Brisbane. RBWH Nursing and Midwifery Director for Women's and Newborn Services Tami Photinos is pleased to be able to offer this model of care to Brisbane mums-to-be.

"We have been working for many years to get this model of care up and running for women wanting to see their own private midwife," Tami said.

"This first phase will allow women to see a credentialed private midwife in the community during the pregnancy and after the birth, but attend at RBWH for birth as a public patient under the care of our staff. Women can also access specialist appointments from RBWH as required.

"At present a small number of private midwives have been credentialed to provide this service in collaboration with RBWH. We hope to expand this number early in 2014."

The midwives will follow referral guidelines to ensure any issues that arise during the pregnancy are referred to RBWH for specialist treatment.

The collaboration also allows for Medicare rebates as the midwives are notated by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia as an eligible midwife.

Phase two will see women have the option of birthing care by their private midwife.



Left: Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local Team Care Coordinator Sue King, Redcliffe Hospital Chronic Disease Nurses Tim Wright and Alison Howard (back left to right). One the program's first patients Helen Buckbee (front right) and her neighbour Naomi.

Better health for people with chronic disease

A program is being trialled at Redcliffe Hospital that may see as many as 150 patients with chronic diseases managed safely out of hospital.

Redcliffe Hospital and Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local are guiding patients with chronic disease and long term chronic conditions to a wellness program that fosters the relationship between a general practitioner and patient to ensure they receive the best possible medical care out of hospital.

Project Manager Tracey Duke, with two Medicare Local team care coordination nurses and a chronic disease nurse at Redcliffe Hospital are approaching people who record high use of hospital services and have had two or more admissions or presentations to the emergency department to take part in the program.

“The program encourages patients to visit their GP regularly and contact them or the chronic disease team first before calling an ambulance or present at the hospital emergency department,” Tracey said.

The Team Care Coordinators and Chronic Disease Nurse facilitate the creation of an individual written plan that may include a range of preventative measures, self management education and support the patient with the appropriate general practitioner (GP).

Patients on the program also receive coordinated access to other services including Non-government organisations, Subacute and Ambulatory Services (SaAS) and Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS).

“With the team and GP regularly kept in contact regarding the patient’s medical condition, if there is an emergency the patients can be directly managed to a ward instead of going through the emergency department,” Tracey said.

“The program has already prevented a large number of re-admissions to Redcliffe Hospital and as the scheme gathers momentum we are confident of preventing more.”

Patients on the program will predominately be diagnosed with diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart failure or asthma.

The 12 month project is funded by the Support, Explore, Excel and Deliver (SEED) Program and the Department of Health, and delivers a patient-centred model of care by the most appropriate provider for people with multiple, complex chronic diseases.

Home support for mums and bubs

A program at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital is supporting new mothers and their families during the first weeks after giving birth.



Above: Kerry Kyriacou and baby Marlon.

The Mums and Bubs Program provides two home visits in the first month following birth to support mother's physical, social and emotional health. Support in the first six weeks following birth helps to lay the foundation for mums to feel confident in their mothering ability and learn their baby's cues for feeding.

For new parents, knowing what feels and looks normal during this time and where to seek help is vital for a new family unit.

The midwife home visits provide the opportunity for both mother and baby to have a wellbeing assessment in the comfort of the home. This visit for mum includes physical and emotional health assessments to ensure recovery from birth is progressing normally and that women know about the options for ongoing care suitable to their individual needs. The gentle reassurance of knowing their baby is feeding and growing well can alleviate some of the stress of motherhood in these early weeks.

Mums and Bubs home visits are offered during the first fortnight following birth and again in the second fortnight following birth. Women have the option of deciding if they would like to take up this offer for one or both visits or be linked into the free community clinics currently offered by Child and Youth Community Services or other services within the community.

Midwives start preparing women for parenthood when they first book in at the hospital. During hospital stays following birth, Midwives provide support and education for mothers to learn while recovering from the birth and assist the mum to confidently care for herself and baby.

The program proudly provided more than 4,600 home visits in 2013-14.

Home visits have long been an option for women who have their babies at RBWH and this program extends this offer to women who birth in public and private facilities and reside within the Metro North catchment.

Results of this program are published electronically on the government's *Blueprint for Better Healthcare in Queensland*.

North Lakes Haematology outpatient service delivers excellence



Patients requiring haematology services in the northern corridor of MNHHS are benefitting from the North Lakes Haematology Service with great feedback from patients.

In its first year of operation the North Lakes Haematology Outpatient Service has delivered more than 5,900 lifesaving treatments or Occasions of Service (OOS) to haematology patients, which is 3,000 more OOS provided to the community in the northern catchment before the service existed.

Importantly, the increase in the number of OOS is partly as a result of MNHHS northern catchment patients being able to receive treatment in their local area, where previously they may have been required to travel to the TPCB or RBWH.

In 2012 MNHHS identified a growing need for haematology services in the northern corridor of MNHHS. At that time, Redcliffe Hospital's Oncology services were operating at full capacity, requiring some haematology patients to travel to the RBWH or TPCB to access cancer treatment.

An investigation to identify options for expanding haematology services in the North Lakes Health Precinct resulted in a decision to transfer haematology services from Redcliffe Hospital to a new outpatient-based day therapy service at North Lakes.

Left: North Lakes Haematology Outpatient Service patients being treated. Inset: The centre waiting room.

Excellence in patient experience

The North Lakes Haematology Service provides patients with a high level of service, according to the results of the October 2014 RBWH Patient Experience survey. One hundred per cent of patients who completed the survey rated their overall experience as good to excellent.

The survey results revealed 93 per cent of patients rated their experience as excellent, and 97 per cent of patients surveyed said they were always treated with dignity and respect.

The survey also confirmed that the majority of patients at the North Lakes Haematology Service were reviewed within 30 minutes of their arrival at the clinic, and that 100 per cent of patients were seen within their categorised wait time for an appointment.

“ All staff are respectful, knowledgeable at all times and truly wonderful staff members who make treatments bearable. ”

“ Everyone is lovely and friendly. They make you feel calm and relaxed, especially when you are nervous. ”



Comments submitted in the survey were very positive and highly regarded staff members.

The North Lakes Haematology Outpatient Service was established in April 2013 at the North Lakes Health Precinct and comprises eight treatment bays and two consultation rooms. The service operates three days a week and has further capacity to extend its operations to five days per week as demand increases.

Treatments provided include low risk chemotherapy and blood and blood product transfusions along with supportive therapies, medical consultation and allied health support.

“ The attention and care is excellent. ”

“ No suggestions on how to improve this centre. Just praise for all the staff I came into contact with. Keep up the great work. ”

Prosthesis music to a little girl's ear

Eleven-year-old Gap resident Chloe Crust is now able to fulfil her dreams of playing the cello, thanks to the work of the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Rehabilitation Engineering Centre.



Above: Chloe Crust has her dream fulfilled thanks to RBWH Rehabilitation Engineer Oliver Mason.
Above right: The components of Chloe's new prosthetic arm.

Chloe was born with a shortened arm above the elbow and dreamed of play instruments at school. After receiving her prosthetic cello adaptor, the keen musician said she feels thrilled with her new skills.

"My plucking device has helped me progress in my cello grades. It helps me move my arm faster to get the plucking right for the speed of the song," Chloe said.

After failed attempts with the violin, Chloe took on the challenge of the cello with the support of her family and school.

Chloe was referred to the RBWH Rehabilitation Engineering Centre (REC) where engineers clinically assess, design and manufacture custom solutions for clients with complex needs.



Chloe and her family met with Rehabilitation Engineer Oliver Mason to discuss the need to create a custom prosthetic adaptor to hold a guitar pick, with the ability for her left side to pluck the string while her right hand holds the note.

Oliver said the prosthesis adaptor is custom built using original designs for Chloe's need.

"I didn't have any previous designs to work from. Prosthetic pick holders do exist but they don't have the folding capability, nor are they designed to use with a cello," Oliver said.

"I had to design and make a solution to hold the plectrum to the cello bow allowing Chloe to pluck strings when necessary, and then flip the device out of the way quickly during songs so that she could play the strings normally with the bow as well.

"It took a few days to make but when the family returned for the first time, it worked straight away. I am ecstatic that I was able to help Chloe."

With the support from RBWH, Chloe can continue making strides in her music.

Improving access to dental care for those who need it

A mobile dental clinic has been located in the Bribie Island area to improve access to oral health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as adults with special needs.

The link between good oral health and good overall health is well established and the mobile clinic has allowed important oral health services to be delivered locally, and in a familiar environment, for those who need it most.

Director of General Practice Division Metro North Oral Health Services, Dr Chris Butson, said the clinic provides treatment to eligible clients who find it hard to travel to their nearest public oral health facility in Caboolture.

These are people who cannot access services easily and delay in dental treatment often results in serious infection and pain with poor overall health outcomes.

“With the mobile clinic we have been able to connect these people with the oral health services they need to stay healthy and live as independently as possible,” Dr Butson said.

The mobile dental clinic offers clinical care Monday to Friday. It is equipped with wheelchair access and caters for those who are not readily mobile.

Patients are offered longer appointments to limit the need for the elderly, frail or those with a disability to have multiple appointments.

Operating from Centacare’s Ningi campus, the clinic provides services to clients of Centacare Waminda, Banksia Beach and Disability services as well as their carers. The Waminda Respite Centre offers centre-based and in home services to frail-aged people and their carers in the Caboolture Shire, with a primary focus on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Centacare Disability Services co-located on the same campus offers a comprehensive range of practical support services for the frail-aged and people with a disability and their carers.

The clinic also provides services to other eligible patients on the Caboolture Dental Hospital waiting list who live in the Bribie Island area.



Left: The mobile clinic reprocessing area.
Above left: The clinic from the outside.



Above: Staff appear in the 'I am the patient experience' video.

The ultimate barometer of success: Our patients' experience

A good patient experience is more than high quality clinical care – it takes other patient needs into account such as physical comfort, access to education and meeting emotional needs.

The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) surveyed patients to see how the hospital performed in regards to patient experience and discovered that patients rated the hospital highly.

The survey asked patients what they thought the most important areas were to ensure they would have a good experience when receiving care as an inpatient or outpatient. They were also asked to rate their patient experience.

The results saw RBWH rate highly in the following areas:

- Valuable information and education was provided to patients
- Patients felt comfortable
- Patients felt they were respected
- Staff listened and took action when patients expressed needs or preferences
- Patients were given emotional support and steps were taken to alleviate fears.

The survey also asked patients if they would recommend the hospital to friends and family and 76 per cent said yes.

The survey has allowed action plans to be put in place and staff are working hard to improve services based on responses, with assistance and guidance from consumer representatives.

RBWH aims for patients, families and carers to expect:

- to be treated with compassion and as partners in their own care
- open communication and ample information about their treatment in language that they can understand
- that staff honour patient's personal preferences to create a care plan they can confidently manage when they go home.

Competitive employment paves the road to recovery

It is widely accepted that clinical recovery in a healthcare setting does not automatically lead to functional recovery out in the world.



Above: Mental Health Clinician Warren, consumer Andrew and employment consultant Ian.

There is growing recognition that competitive employment demonstrates functional recovery and helps mental health consumers to integrate more successfully into – and get more out of – everyday life.

Historically, few public mental health consumers were referred to vocational services or have vocational goals identified in their recovery plans but that is changing and Metro North Mental Health Services has been working to deliver employment solutions within a recovery oriented framework.

Redcliffe-Caboolture Mental Health services are working in partnership with HELP employment agency to deliver the Integrated Employment Program.

The ethos of the program is to aid recovery in a number of ways including reducing stigma by providing access to a socially-valued role, which leads to increased self-efficacy, self-esteem, structure and practical support that yields a host of benefits.

The program is based on seven evidence-based principles:

- Eligibility is based on consumer choice
- Supported employment is integrated with treatment

- Competitive employment is the primary goal
- Rapid job search (first employer contact within four weeks)
- Job finding, and all assistance, is individualised
- Follow-along supports are continuous
- Financial planning is provided.

Along with increased self-esteem comes increased opportunities for social inclusion and the program provides time structure and a reason to stay well, that perpetuates this positive cycle to set consumers up for their best chance at a successful recovery.

The added benefits of the Integrated Employment program include improved communication between the services with knowledge and expertise flow across sectors. The employment consultants are co-located with the clinical teams at both community mental health teams, ensuring regular communication with case managers about progress of individual consumers seeking employment.

There are 93 referrals currently in place for the Redcliffe- Caboolture Integrated Employment Program.

“ I like working at the airport. I get to move around and be out in the fresh air some of the time. Also you get to meet lots of people who are coming and going. I even met Wally Lewis once.”



Above: Students from St John's College attend the P.A.R.T.Y. Program and follow the journey of the trauma patient. **Opposite right:** Students from Good Shepherd Lutheran College make a pledge after their P.A.R.T.Y. Program experience, and students from Everton Park State High School learn what it's like to be disabled at the school-based program.

Making the P.A.R.T.Y. bigger

Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH) has been inviting young people to the P.A.R.T.Y. (Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth) program to reduce their risk of injury and disability and more young people can now join in.

Immensely popular with Queensland schools, P.A.R.T.Y. has been run by the RBWH Trauma Unit since 2010. It is an interactive full-day in-hospital program which, through a series of 'hands on' activities and exposure to real-life trauma patients, gives students aged 15-19 years the ability to recognise potential injury-producing situations, make prevention-oriented choices and adopt behaviour that minimises unnecessary risks.

Almost 40 per cent of deaths in teenagers and young adults aged between 15 and 25 are caused through road trauma. The P.A.R.T.Y. Program delivers not only a powerful road safety message to young people at a critical time in their lives – before they learn to drive – but a powerful message relating to the consequences of making bad decisions and the effects of alcohol and drugs.

The RBWH P.A.R.T.Y. Program was the first hospital based program to be implemented in Queensland. Since it commenced in April 2010, more than 1,500 students have attended. The program has now been introduced to other locations giving more young people the opportunity to attend. RBWH introduced the program at



Nambour Hospital in February 2014 with plans for further rollout to other hospitals across the state.

A first of its kind, three and half hour school-based program has also been launched to bring some of the ‘hands on’ P.A.R.T.Y. activities into the school environment. This modified program allows a larger number of students to participate (up to 110 at a time).

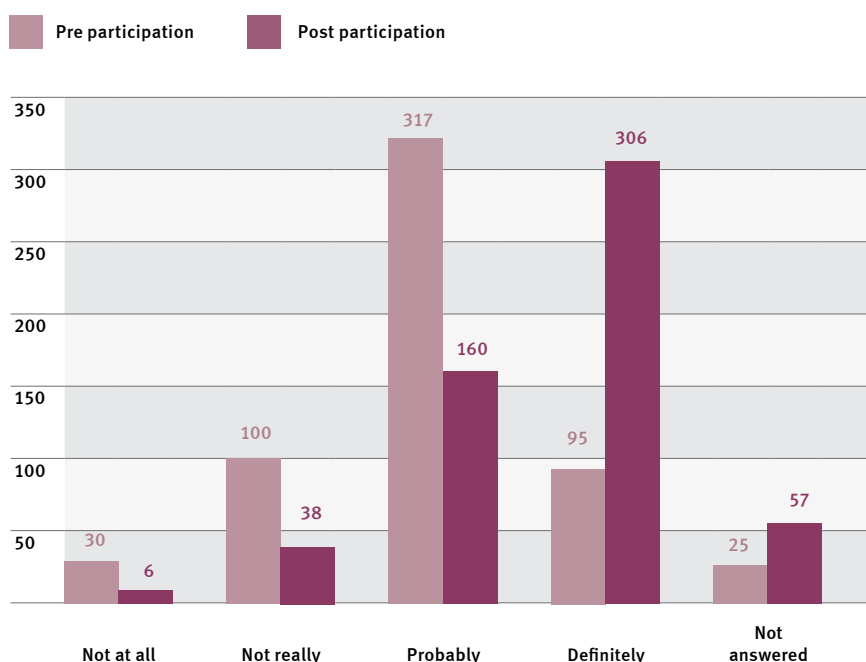
There are more than 100 sites running the P.A.R.T.Y. program worldwide and a 10 year evaluation from Canada showed that teenagers who participated in the program had a reduced incidence of major trauma and traffic offences when compared to those who did not participate.

An evaluation method has been designed to measure the acceptance of the program to participants along with short-term changes in attitudes and knowledge. Those participating in hospital-based programs complete a pre-program survey, post-program survey and are followed up at four months (with the same instrument). Participants in the modified school-based program complete a pre-program survey and a post-program survey.

Survey result from school-based program

Survey results consistently show the difference the P.A.R.T.Y. program makes in encouraging students to think differently about their actions. The data also reinforces the value of the modified school-based program.

Question: Do you think the P.A.R.T.Y. Program will make a difference to the way you think about your actions in the future?





Graham gets to breathe easier

Graham Allen worked in the building industry for most of his life. The active 74-year-old is now semi-retired and enjoying his acreage in Mooloolah where he breeds horses, a side-line he has enjoyed for many years.

Just six years ago, Graham was informed of a partial block in one of his arteries. While it was monitored closely, a subsequent test showed the artery had virtually closed and intervention was required.

Graham had trouble breathing, leading up to the latest test, but had put it down to his lungs being full of asbestos from his days in the building industry.

“After working on a roof for a while, I would be so tired at the end of the day I’d have to sit down for half an hour before I could do anything,” Graham said.

At The Prince Charles Hospital, Graham was given the opportunity to be part of a world-wide research program and receive a unique drug-eluting stent.

This stent was guided by a wire from a cut in his groin and fed through to cover the blockage in his artery. The stent is impregnated with drugs, which will release over time and encourage tissue growth where the blockage occurred.

This particular stent is also designed to completely dissolve once it has worked its magic in Graham’s artery. Over three to five years he will literally breathe the life-giving device out of his body.

This stent is the second of its kind to be trialled at TPCH. As the new devices come on to the market they are used in a heavily monitored research program which determines their efficacy.

Graham had two new devices successfully deployed during his procedure.

Once the stent was put in place, its positioning inside the artery was able to be visually inspected to make sure it completely filled the space.

This purpose-designed device captures images from inside the artery and displays moving photographs so operators can check their work as the artery begins to function fully again.



Top: All smiles – patient Graham Allen. Above: The stent is the second of its kind to be trialled at TPCH.

Patient education makes all the difference

Kasha Marczak was on her way to bingo when the 70-year-old suffered a ‘small’ heart attack and found herself at Redcliffe Hospital instead.

While Kasha was quickly stabilised and her symptoms abated, further investigation was needed and it was decided that she would have an angiogram at The Prince Charles Hospital or The Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital.

For a patient who had only seen the inside of a hospital for the birth of her two children and an operation on

her appendix when she was 10 years old, the thought of an angiogram and further treatment was confusing and overwhelming.

Thanks to Redcliffe Hospital’s Coronary Care Nurses and a generous gift from the Redcliffe Hospital Auxiliary Kasha was soon reassured she was on the right track.

Acting Clinical Nurse Consultant, Louise Joce, said it is quite common for patients to be confused about their heart condition and daunted by treatment prospects, but these feelings could be alleviated with the right education.

“Cardiac problems such as coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, angina, arrhythmias and myocardial infarction are conditions that can be difficult for a patient to grasp,” Louise said.

“As Coronary Care Nurses we play a vital role in the care, teaching and rehabilitation of our patients and we have various educational tools we can use to help our patients understand what is happening to them.

“The Redcliffe Hospital Auxiliary boosted these efforts by providing us with funds to purchase a portable DVD player so we can bring patient education to the bedside.

“Kasha and other patients who are waiting for procedures can now be much better informed well in advance of their treatment.”

The education Kasha was provided helped her take a step towards recovery by explaining what was coming next and giving her reassurance she wouldn’t otherwise have.

“Kasha and other patients who are waiting for procedures can now be much better informed well in advance of their treatment.”

Below: Kasha Marczak with the portable DVD player used for patient education.





Above: James Overall with Physiotherapist Lili Tang.

Cystic Fibrosis proves no barrier for James

James Overall water skis twice a week, plays tennis once a week, completes his exercise program at least three times a week, and has recently taken up golf. It's a very active life for a 63-year-old, let alone one living with cystic fibrosis.

“ I was taught skills to manage my condition that no one has ever taught me. I was taught how to breathe properly and to use my ventolin in the correct manner. These skills have helped me to manage my condition more effectively and I have never felt better. ”

James, who is the second oldest Australian with cystic fibrosis, has no intention of slowing down and believes the secret to a happy life is to live in the moment - not worry about what could happen and surround yourself with other like-minded people.

Eventually James will require a double lung transplant, however he has a world class health team to support him.

James said the respiratory team at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH) was fantastic, providing him with the medical support he needed.

“Not only have I learned valuable skills to manage my condition, I also feel confident that I am medically fit to receive the transplant,” James said.

The Lung Transplant Team at TPCH referred James to the North Lakes Complex Chronic Disease Team run by Subacute and Ambulatory Services (SaAS) in November 2013 to participate in their eight week respiratory rehabilitation program to enhance the treatment he was receiving and prepare him for the double lung transplant.

“My condition usually means I am more susceptible to getting lung infections. However, for the past nine months I have been infection free. My positive attitude and exercise program are making me stronger physically and mentally, and I believe this is preventing the infections,” he said.

“The nurses and physiotherapists were so impressed with my physical fitness that my tailored exercise program included more physically demanding elements than others in the class.

“I was an active person before attending the rehabilitation program, however the new skills I have learned and the various exercises I was taught have motivated me to continue to improve my fitness.

“I was taught skills to manage my condition that no one has ever taught me. I was taught how to breathe properly and to use my ventolin in the correct manner. These skills have helped me to manage my condition more effectively and I have never felt better.”

The Complex Chronic Disease Team is based at the North Lakes Health Precinct and Nundah Community Health Centre and also provides services across Redcliffe, Caboolture and Chermside Community Health Centres.

The service allows clients like James to receive treatment at a community health centre and maintain their usual lifestyle.

Without these much needed services, clients would have higher presentation and readmission rates.

The Complex Chronic Disease Team is a highly skilled team of health professionals including a geriatrician, general physician, nurses dietician, exercise physiologist, neuropsychologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, psychologist, social worker and a speech pathologist.



Mental health companion support proves key to success

There is clear evidence to support the theory that people with a lived experience of mental illness be role models and provide hope for others with a mental illness.

Meaningful peer interaction and support is associated with innovative recovery-oriented services internationally, and people with their own experience of mental illness, often called 'peers' or 'companions', have been proven to directly contribute to the recovery of others with a mental illness.

The Consumer Companion Program was introduced into Metro North Mental Health (MNMH) Service with the aim of providing peer support and positive interaction to consumers who are inpatients of mental health facilities through 'companions' who have overcome a similar experience.

Consumer Companions may support somebody during their hospital stay in a variety of ways, such as:

Providing activities –
Board games and participate
in some groups

Talking to patients –
Be an empathic listener

Supporting people to provide
feedback to the service

Sharing their own lived
experiences as appropriate

Providing a positive role model
for consumers and staff

Improving patients' mood

Meeting patients' needs

Providing guidance on the ward

Providing companionship

Through their own lived experience, these companions give valued support and insight, which can be transformative in reframing of an illness experience. Through their interactions, they give to others, which is an important component of healing.

The program has gone from strength to strength with Consumer Companions providing a total of 96 hours of peer support every week in the Adult Acute Inpatient Units and Secure Mental Health Rehabilitation Units across Metro North Mental Health.



Above: Consumer companions Matt and Cassie. **Opposite:** Companions make a connection in a simple but very effective way with patients that proves mutually beneficial for both parties.

Companions make a connection in a simple but very effective way with patients that proves mutually beneficial for both parties and can range, in practice, from guidance on a ward to the sharing of stories and experiences.

Matt, who has been a companion for almost five years now, says the program provides hope – “This works. People come around. I’ve seen it in action and it’s great to see them get better and move on.”

“You give them space and build some trust and they come around.”

Another companion, Cassie, who has been in the program for seven months, says that the reciprocal nature of the companion support dynamic means that both parties benefit from the arrangement and this makes a real difference to improved feelings of wellbeing.

“As much as I’ve helped them, I feel this work has helped me to improve and let go of old ways of being,” Cassie said.

At the most recent Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) periodic review of the RBWH, surveyors commented favourably on the Consumer Companion Program.

Telehealth technology puts patients first

Kilcoy Hospital has been working with other Metro North facilities to improve patient flow in emergency departments, by working in innovative ways to support local patients through the use of telehealth technology.



Telehealth services give patients living in rural, remote and outer metropolitan locations greater access to a range of specialist consultations. By bridging the gap – and eradicating the inconvenience caused by geographical distance, a patient’s personal commitments and family or childcare arrangements – telehealth delivers real-time health consultations online by providing specialist healthcare via video link up.

In today’s world of rapidly increasing technological changes, embracing the use of telehealth provides a service back to the community, allowing patients to make choices as to whether they have to travel potentially hundreds of kilometres for a half hour appointment.

The innovative approaches of staff show that the team at Kilcoy Hospital are driving their telehealth initiative with energy and commitment to increase the capacity to offer outpatient sessions to the community of Kilcoy and surrounds for specialist appointments that occur in Brisbane, Redcliffe and Caboolture.

Director of Nursing and facility manager at Kilcoy Hospital, Lyndie Best says “this is very patient-centred and with the redevelopment of our old buildings, here at Kilcoy, we are creating a very warm and welcoming space which will be dedicated to outpatient appointments”.

The telehealth team have found that it is through the continued support of the specialist outpatient clinics across the service at Metro North HHS that this vision will become a reality.

“Kilcoy Hospital can provide blood tests prior to a session, which are then made accessible to the specialist and plain x-rays can also be performed if required by nursing operators at Kilcoy,” Ms Best said.

Most beneficially, this type of preparation means that any pre-workup can be achieved prior to the telehealth session.”

Kilcoy Hospital also holds a separate mobile telehealth unit which is able to connect to the fracture clinic appointments at Redcliffe for the patients who are non-weight bearing for a period of time, and are unsafe to travel home.

X-rays can also be performed prior to these scheduled sessions and any other information such as physiotherapy updates can be provided.

“It is the support of the specialist outpatients department and the consultants that is key to the process. A prime example of putting patients at the centre of care, telehealth prevents a rather long and sometimes uncomfortable trip, for some, from Kilcoy to Redcliffe Hospital,” Ms Best said.

“Other uses that we are exploring with telehealth extend to working with other disciplines such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists and psychologists over distance, and this is an area we are enthusiastic to pursue with the Director of Allied Health across Kidchek and the diagnosis of behaviours where possible.”

Meanwhile, the timely consultation with nurse wound consultants continues to be facilitated via telehealth at the facility, with patients able to describe how the wound feels while staff identify areas for the consultant to zoom in on and view in real-time.

The Telehealth team at Kilcoy Hospital are not stopping there though.

“Telehealth also needs to have the support of the local GPs so that they do not ‘tick’ the box that says no telehealth available on the patient travel forms and we are looking to develop a pamphlet for the patients to take with them to their appointments to ask if they can have telehealth appointments scheduled for future appointments,” Ms Best said.



Above: Telehealth delivers real-time health consultations online by providing specialist healthcare via video link up.

“ Other uses that we are exploring with telehealth extend to working with other disciplines such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists and psychologists over distance.”