

# Your Voice @ the Royal

A consumer newsletter from Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

July 2018

Metro North Hospital and Health Service *Putting people first*



**Fiona Comber**  
Chair, Consumer Advisory Group  
Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

## A message from Fiona

I hope you can take a few moments out of your busy day of hospital appointments and visits to read words from these people who represent the consumers and community around Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH).

Consumer representatives are people who have had a lived experience of using the services of RBWH, just like you. We attend meetings and are involved in discussions on a variety of issues and topics that affect you, the consumer.

Our role is to help improve your experience and work with the services to plan and deliver care. The focus is on ways that meet community values and needs, while providing the highest standard of healthcare.

In this edition you will read about how to look after yourself this winter, be involved in your own health, changes around the hospital during Ekka season and some great highlights from the last few months.

Enjoy!

Regards,  
**Fiona**

**AVOID  
THE FLU**

As the weather starts to cool down and Brisbane enjoys a few weeks of lower temperatures, now is a good time to think about what you can do to protect yourself and your family from the flu.

Our very young, frail, unwell or older people are more at risk than most when it comes to the flu, and the complications can be severe.

You don't have to wait and hope you don't catch the flu. There are a few simple steps to avoid and minimise the risk to yourself and those around you. Why not take a moment to read our few tips from infection control about avoiding or minimising the spread of the dreaded flu.



**ALWAYS COVER YOUR COUGH**



**USE A TISSUE OR YOUR SLEEVE  
WHEN YOU COUGH OR SNEEZE**



**CLEAN YOUR HANDS AFTER  
COUGHING OR SNEEZING**



**IF YOU HAVE A FEVER, COUGH  
OR TROUBLE BREATHING,  
SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE**



**Queensland  
Government**



# Feeling the love at Patient Experience Week



Patient Experience Week (23-28 April) was celebrated a little differently this year at RBWH.

Over the course of four days, we had a pop-up Compassion Café (an initiative of the Quality Innovation and Patient Safety Service and RBWH Consumers) which served hundreds of cups of free tea and coffee, cupcakes and a variety of biscuits and slices to patients, families and carers.

Compassion is one of the Metro North Values, and sharing stories of kindness here at RBWH was a great way to see our Values In Action.

I thought it was fantastic to see the engagement from both staff and consumers.

We wanted to do something more hands on for the thousands of people who walk through these doors each day.

I loved hearing the stories of kindness... people come here during some of the most vulnerable times in their lives and it's heart-warming to hear that they've been positively impacted by staff here at RBWH.

The team received numerous pieces of feedback about random acts of kindness and other positive comments and compliments from patients, carers and families about their time at RBWH.



*The compassion shown to me by the nurses on many a lonely night during my stay here, when all I needed was someone to talk to and they provided that*

– Patient



*The friendly staff when I was down and in pain. The follow up care. The time the doctor gave me this morning to answer my questions was very important*

– Patient



*Such a wonderful act of kindness. It has made a very difficult day much easier (about Compassion café)*

– Patient



*The sense of community here and the way kindness and compassion has been embedded in the hospital culture, particularly these last 2 years*

– Staff



*Taking the time to talk to people. Swap life stories and treat people as friends*

– Staff

The numerous comments will inform how the RBWH will continue to enhance a positive patient/carer and staff experience. Thanks to all the volunteers from staff and consumers, including staff from QIPSS, Nurse Unit Managers, members of the Consumer Advisory Group, Clinical Council, MNHHS Board, the RBWH Executive Team and the Values in Action team.

Our sincere gratitude to RBWH Senior Events Coordinator, Jeni de Hayr, who was instrumental to the success of the Compassion Café. – **CAG Chair Fiona Comber**



## YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM

### 1. Who is part of your healthcare team?

GP, consultant team (includes resident, registrar (clinical professional you will see the most at every morning/afternoon round), NUM, team leader, ward nurses, allied health professionals, wardies, cleaners, and YOU.

### 2. What role do these team members play?

Each member of your healthcare team plays a crucial role in your care throughout your patient journey. While you are in hospital as an inpatient, it is up to these members to monitor, document, provide appropriate treatment, and ensure you are safe and comfortable during your stay. They are also responsible for helping you prepare for the time when you leave the hospital.

### 3. What role do YOU play?

Perhaps the most important role. Without your participation the goal of getting you home better than when you came in would not be successful. Here it is emphasised that you participate by asking the questions (and there is no such thing as a wrong question) that will help you understand what is going on with your health. Understanding what is expected of you to help you get better. More importantly, not being afraid to question the treatments being offered—asking if there are alternatives that may suit your needs better. Remember, if you don't ask then your team of healthcare professionals will not know your wishes.



## YOUR HEALTHCARE DECISIONS

### 1. Who makes these decisions?

After assessment and treatment of your condition, you and your healthcare team will decide together on the best course of action as an inpatient or an outpatient.

### 2. What are your rights?

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights describes the rights of patients and other people using the Australian health system. The charter helps everyone work together towards a safe and high quality health outcome.

– **Maria Herbertson,**  
Consumer Representative



## Meet Paul

After experiencing years of mental health battles, I developed a meaningful intention to reach out to others and to promote hope, recovery, and to take a stance against stigmatisation and discrimination.

I want to see others who are struggling to gain a sense of purpose and to reach their potential. Due to this, I became interested in becoming a consumer representative.

I now have the privilege of doing this through various committees and working groups throughout Metro North Health and Hospital Service (MNHHS), Brisbane North Primary Health Network (PHN), and international committees including the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP).

I am now involved with the Consumer Advisory Group (CAG) at the RBWH, and am looking forward to contributing to this on behalf of consumers in the community. Suicide awareness and prevention is one of my steadfast priorities and interests, I am currently undertaking QPR facilitator training (QPRinstitute.com) and will later commence Mental Health First Aid.

I also have a desire to see positive change throughout all of Queensland's health services in other areas such as homelessness, aged care, and other specific health and mental health issues such as diabetes, eating disorders and dementia or neurocognitive disorders. I aim to promote and be an advocate for person-centred approaches to care and support.

Consumer representatives like me have an important role to play in a hospital community. Not just as a voice in the delivery of care but also as recipients of the hospital's services. Our input helps complete the 360 degree view of how healthcare should be delivered."

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS HELP, CALL LIFELINE ON 13 11 14.**

## Choosing Wisely – Consumers surveying consumers

Choosing Wisely Australia is helping healthcare providers and patients start important conversations about improving the quality of healthcare by encouraging patients and carers to ask questions about their healthcare.

In May the RBWH Consumer Advisory Group Chair Fiona Comber led a survey in Level One Outpatients Services with our patients. This survey was to gain an understanding of what people think of medical tests, treatments and procedures and how they feel talking to their doctor or other healthcare providers (for example nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists). This information will then be used by the team to inform how the organisation can better support these important conversations.

**– RBWH Acting Executive Director Performance, Innovation and Implementation Jessica Toleman**



## Patient care after-hours

In 2016 several of our consumers attended a RBWH Workshop with our clinicians and leaders to talk about how we could advance patient care after-hours. At this workshop attendees came up with some great ideas.

**– Dr Julian DeLooze (pictured) and Assistant Nursing Director Mary Fenn**

Here we are in 2018 and we have introduced quite a number of innovations to support patient care, 24 hours a day:

- We put an extra resident doctor on overnight.
- We now have an electronic 'task manager' so nurses can send non-urgent patient task requests direct to the ward call's iPad.
- We introduced a flagging system across all of our wards so that at any time all our doctors and nurses can easily identify which patients need to be closely monitored.
- We started a new service called UP LATE so now there is a senior nurse and senior registrar rostered to our after-hours shifts. This has assisted ward calls and ward nurses in managing complex patient situations after-hours.
- We are in the process of completing patient and staff surveys to see if the changes we have made are making a difference.





## Drop the Jargon day

Drop the Jargon is a day for professionals in Australian health community services to use plain language and to use words that are more easily understood by everyone when speaking to patients, carers and family members.

RBWH is marking this day on 24 October. Jargon can cause confusion and misunderstanding, especially when talking about your health.



## RBWH website

The new and improved RBWH website is a great source of information about the hospital and its services. It includes important information about parking and public transport, maps of the facility, how to prepare for your appointment or stay, and descriptions about the different clinics and services available.

Visit [www.metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/](http://www.metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/) for more information



## July 27

### Head and Neck Cancer Day – July 27

Did you know, around 1000 Queenslanders are expected to be diagnosed with head and neck cancer each year? A very large percentage of those will be treated at RBWH. World Head and Neck Cancer Day (27 July) raises awareness for the disease.

Make sure you're in the know.



## Get familiar

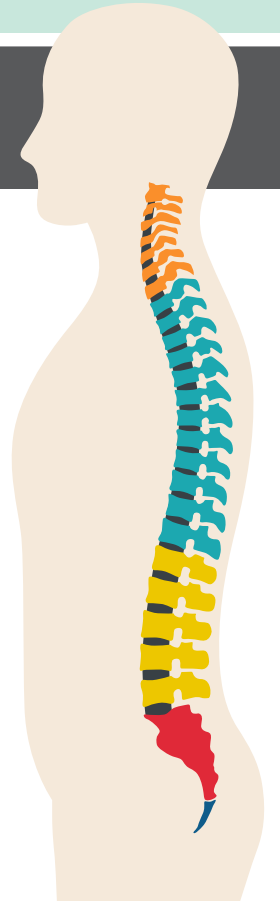
- Consumers- a term to refer to patients, carers, and family members who are users of the health service.
- Comorbidities – living with one or more medical conditions at the same time that impact on a person's health and wellbeing.
- Idiopathic – any disease of unknown cause or origin.
- Anaesthetic – is a drug to prevent pain during surgery, completely blocking any feeling during surgery.
- MNHHS- Metro North Hospital and Health Service
- CAG- Consumer Advisory Group – a group of consumer representatives that advocate for the needs and values of consumers throughout the hospital. This group meet monthly and report to the Executive.
- ACHS – Australian Council on Healthcare Standards – This is the organisation responsible for healthcare quality improvement and the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.
- Registrar – a registrar is someone who has received advanced training in particular field of medicine, who may go on to be a consultant or general practitioner.

## Tips for back health from RBWH Physiotherapy Department

### 5 tips for a healthy spine:

1. Maintain good postural awareness – poor posture places pressure on your spine leading to pain and degenerative conditions. Try to maintain the natural curves of the spine, and avoid long periods of sitting.
2. Strengthen & improve control of core and spinal support muscles and maintain general fitness. Your physiotherapist can advise you on specific exercises to strengthen your core, and stretches to reduce stress on the spine.
3. Manage weight with a healthy balanced diet and regular low impact exercise.
4. Take note in the workplace – use an ergonomic chair, have your workstation assessed, make sure you take regular breaks from sustained positions, and use correct lifting techniques if required.
5. Manage stress and general health, including regular relaxation routines, avoid smoking and excess alcohol consumption and get plenty of sleep.

Most importantly, see a physiotherapist for advice and management of back pain symptoms if they occur.



## Partnering with our Consumers and Accreditation praise

Recently the hospital welcomed a team of surveyors from the Australian Council of Healthcare Standards (ACHS) for RBWH's and Metro North Oral Health's Periodic Review.

This is always an opportunity to showcase the work we do across many of the departments and sites around our facilities. Their feedback generally was very positive, I was personally very thrilled to hear such warm words around the hospital's strong partnership with patients and consumers.

I know how hard the staff at RBWH and Metro North Oral Health work to put patients first, and it's fantastic for that to be recognised. As one of the surveyors said, RBWH takes into account the contributions of consumers and patients "from the bedside to the boardroom".

Consumers play a critical role in healthcare and we here at CAG work extraordinarily hard to ensure they are part of the decisions made here at RBWH.

It was wonderful to hear that being recognised.  
– Fiona

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Metro North Hospital  
and Health Service

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