

Your Voice @ the Royal

A consumer newsletter from Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital

August 2020

Metro North Hospital and Health Service *Putting people first*

This newsletter is written by consumers for consumers and brings you all of the latest news and important information from Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital (RBWH).



Gary Power

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

A message from Gary

Hi everybody,

Welcome back to Your Voice @ The Royal. We know many of you have faced unique challenges throughout the first half of 2020, and it has certainly been a busy time for our staff who have been working hard to prepare for and respond to COVID-19. Some of the team's great work and achievements will be highlighted in this edition, as well as a few of the lessons learned during COVID-19 which will inform better outcomes for consumers and carers.

The RBWH Consumer Advisory Group (CAG) have also been busy finding worthy replacements for a number of incredible consumer representatives who have moved on. The latest and greatest loss to our group will be the departure of Faileen who has weighed anchor and moved to Bowen to pursue her sailing and work interests. Our focus now is on increasing our representation of diversified interests in the CAG. We are sure that our new members will bring great experience and knowledge to their role on your behalf.

Happy reading.

Regards,
Gary

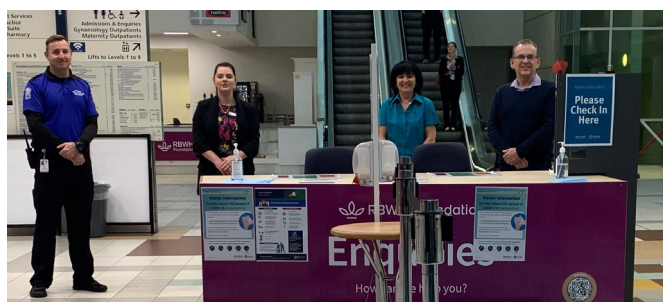
Lesson learned from COVID-19

"There is nothing like a crisis to focus the mind," reads the old English saying that has certainly found its place at RBWH in recent months.

While COVID-19 has posed many challenges for the healthcare system at large, it has also encouraged innovative ideas which will shape the delivery of healthcare for years to come. Here's a recap of some of the key initiatives born out of the challenge of COVID-19:

- **Telehealth:** To limit the number of people coming in and out of facilities, a number of face-to-face consultations were moved to virtual mode of delivery, which enabled consumers and their carers to receive the care they needed without having to enter the facility.
- **Care in the home:** This concept was based on Hospital in the Home, which provides care to public hospital patients in the comfort of their home. While this model had great support from consumers before COVID 19, it has been now been considered as an option for even emergency admissions.
- **Community management for mental health:** In the area of mental health, greater attention has been focused on community management, which means consumers and carers have been able to access the care they want and need in the right setting.

These innovations will not only improve healthcare delivery and accessibility, they will help RBWH weather similar crises in the future. Well done RBWH!



Our new information desk

The simplest ideas are often the most effective. This is certainly true for RBWH's new information desk.

We now have full-time staff welcoming and guiding incoming visitors and patients to where they need to go. The new information desk also acts as a safety filter, with staff providing hand hygiene facilities and asking important questions to ensure people are symptom-free and safe to enter the facility.

Here's a few of our happy staff members!



Keeping safe from infection: Lessons from someone with no immune system

By John-Michael Barrie

John-Michael Barrie is a patient at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and has lived with a compromised immune system for over ten years. Knowing the risk an ordinary bug can pose, he's spent years mastering practices, like physical distancing and elbow greetings, that were novel to many of us before COVID-19.

I was diagnosed with cancer in 2010 and, despite a successful allogeneic bone marrow transplant, I developed a condition called Graft Versus Host Disease (GVHD). As a result, my transplanted immune system remains suppressed and it leaves me at high risk of infection from everything.

In some ways, I've felt disappointed that it's taken a global pandemic for people to remember to wash their hands or stay home when unwell but in other ways, I'm relieved that more people are recognising the importance of these simple strategies. Here's my top tips for keeping safe from infection.

Wash your hands, and wash them again

Good hand hygiene is the simplest, most effective way you can keep yourself and others safe.

When I first received my diagnosis, I found myself recalling the lessons my parents taught me as a child. Many of these lessons were hardwired, like washing my hands before preparing food, and after eating, or touching an animal. But others required a more conscious effort to practice, like washing my hands after touching surfaces like door handles, petrol pumps and shopping carts, before I touch anything else, particularly any area of my face.

How you clean your hands is just as important as how often you clean them. Studies show our fingertips, palms and thumbs are the areas of our hands most often missed. Hand sanitiser is a great option, but nothing beats a thorough wash with soap and water for ensuring you don't miss a spot.

Elbow bumps are the new handshakes

Long before COVID-19 'elbow bumps' were a thing, I decided not to shake anyone's hands. For me, it was a no-brainer. Something as simple as wiping my nose after shaking someone's hand could have me in hospital for a week. With COVID-19 in parts of the country, and as something that we're all susceptible to, it's a risk to assume the other person's hand hygiene practices are as diligent as your own. Out with the handshake and in with the elbow bumps, I say!

Limit touching shared surfaces

I haven't touched a lift button for years. I've used my cane or the corner of my phone instead. I've had some funny looks over the years, so I must admit it's a welcome change seeing others do the same. Other public surfaces I avoid touching include self-ordering screens at fast food outlets, and self-checkouts. Sometimes it's not possible to avoid touching shared surfaces, so remember to have your sanitiser handy!

Choose your public outings with care

You don't need to make dramatic changes to the way you live, but it's still a good idea to take care when choosing your public outings. Find quieter times of the day to go shopping, like early in the mornings. Continue to be social, but don't spend time with people who are unwell. Go out to lunch or dinner, but don't share your food. These are just some little tweaks you can make to reduce the risk of catching or passing on infection.

If in doubt, wear a mask

I don't wear a mask every time I am out but, since COVID-19, I always carry one with me. I assess the situation, the risk, and come to a decision whether to wear one or not. As with good hand hygiene, wearing a mask is one of the simplest things I can do to keep safe, which is more important than how unfashionable it may appear.

John-Michael Barrie's story of surviving cancer and his ongoing battle with GVHD, Indomitable Will, is available now. Please visit www.johnmichaelbarrie.com for details.



Welcome new consumer representatives

Welcome to Shannah, Anja and Amanda to our Consumer Advisory Program. We are very excited to partner with our consumers and you will get the chance to learn more about our new members in future editions. Stay tuned!

If you are interested in partnering with us, please contact us via RBWH_CE@health.qld.gov.au. We look forward to hearing from you.



Visiting hours

To help reduce the spread of COVID-19 (coronavirus) we are taking extra precautions when it comes to visits. For the most up-to-date information on visiting, please access <https://metronorth.health.qld.gov.au/rbwh/patients-and-visitors>

We understand these restrictions may be difficult for some, and we appreciate the important role visitors play in a patient's recovery. That's why we encourage you to stay connected through phone, text, email, social media or video-chat. If you're new to these platforms, we have created some guides on how to best keep in touch. You can even use our free Wi-Fi. Find out more [here](#).



Be our guest! Free patient Wi-Fi service

A free Wi-Fi service is now available so you can stay connected with family and friends during your stay or visit.

The service works on any Wi-Fi enabled device and does not require a password to connect. To connect, all you need to do is:

1. Select the MetroNorth-PatientWi-Fi network on your device.
2. Read the Metro North Wi-Fi Internet Terms of Use. Should you agree and accept you will be connected to the free Wi-Fi service.

Enhancing mental health care for families

By James Farrell

Becoming a parent can be one of life's greatest joys but it does not come without challenges.

More women are speaking up about the unique impacts parenting can have on relationships, work and their sense of self, but less spoken about are the struggles new and expecting fathers face.

Recognising the important role new and expecting dads play, Metro North Hospital and Health Service (MNHHS) launched the Enhancing Mental Health Care for Families project. The project, now in its final stage of report writing, focused on the experiences of fathers and partners in order to deliver more inclusive care and support for new parents. Staff education about supporting both parents also became an important part of the project, as well as investigating the use of screening tools to gauge the mental health of expectant partners.



New dad Justin is chuffed with the safe arrival of baby Mila and the support received from RBWH midwife Holly.

As a consumer representative on the project steering group, it was great to see MNHHS develop a person-centred approach to the project, with surveys and focus groups designed to ensure consumers' voices were at the centre of all aspects of the project.

It was great to get a sense of the caring approach demonstrated by all multi-disciplinary staff on the committee.

The Enhancing Mental Health Care for Families project will ensure families in our community receive vital support and care in this new and exciting stage of their lives.



Music therapy in radiation treatment unit

By Julie-Anne Outhwaite
Advanced Radiation Therapist

We have listened to music on the radio, gramophone, from a boombox, or more recently from air pods. Songs transport us to a different time and space, creating the soundtracks to our first kiss, weddings and days at the beach.

During Radiation Therapy planning and treatment, patients must remain stationary for up to one hour and music has proven to reduce anxiety levels, depression, and treatment related stress, fatigue and pain.

New music equipment was kindly donated by 4ULOC and RBWH Foundation with Spotify, free music streaming, added to the new tablets. Our RBWH Cancer Care patients were surveyed before and after the music was updated, to find out what our patients wanted (Feb 2020 and May 2020).

The results showed that 95-98% of the patients thought that music relaxed them in the treatment room. The patients said the volume of the music was better with the quality of the new speakers cutting through the noise, rather than blasting over the top of the treatment machine. The music type and genre were more likely to meet their expectations with the use of Spotify. Men aged 60-75, from the era of high-octane Rock 'n' Roll when possibilities were limitless, were more likely to want to choose their own music.

For many, this upgrade is music to their ears.



Patients to receive access to specialist treatment at a new Herston facility

The Metro North community will have the opportunity to access more healthcare services at a specialist health facility that will open at Herston next year.

The Surgical, Treatment and Rehabilitation Service (STARS) is Metro North's brand-new facility that will bring together rehabilitation services and elective surgery, plus a range of specialist outpatient services, to help meet the demand for healthcare services.

With 100 beds for rehabilitation and geriatric patients, STARS will be one of the largest specialist rehabilitation services in the southern hemisphere. It will increase access to geriatric services, expand rehabilitation services, offer extensive therapy areas, and in 2022, will open a new specialist rehabilitation unit.

Key existing rehabilitation services in Windsor will relocate to the purpose-built facility STARS. Both the Geriatric and Rehabilitation Unit and the Geriatric Evaluation Management Service will move to STARS in February 2021, and the Rehabilitation Engineering service will relocate to STARS in November 2020.



STARS will open with a short-stay elective surgery service for patients with low complexity surgical procedures across a range of targeted specialty areas, including Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT), General Surgery, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedics and Urology, plus endoscopy services.

The benefit of these new surgical and procedural services that will be available at STARS will help to reduce the number of sub-acute rehabilitation patients being treated in acute beds and also improve the wait time for patients requiring specialist services.

Our existing patients will be informed of any changes to their outpatient appointments in the coming months. In the meantime, you will continue to be treated by our caring staff.

More information will be available to patients in the future. General information about services are available from the STARS website.

CAG profile - meet Doug

My name is Doug Wright.

I was involved in a head-on collision in September 2012 where an oncoming vehicle swerved, over-corrected and hit me head on. I was trapped in my vehicle for over three hours with multiple broken bones and trauma - awake for the whole ordeal and in unimaginable pain.

I was flown by air ambulance to emergency and for the next four and a half months, I went through multiple operations and hours of rehabilitation before finally heading home. I was looked after in my home by my wife and the visiting Blue Nurses. It was a very difficult and painful time, and everything was a challenge.



I had monthly visits to the hospital and physio three times a week. Between 2014 and 2019, I had further operations with another 7 week stay in hospital. I ended up with an above knee amputation and learnt to walk again with a prosthetic.

As a result of spending so much time at RBWH, I have tried to add value by being a consumer representative on the Consumer Advisory Group. I am also part of the Surgical and Perioperative Services Clinical Governance Committee.

I think it is important to be a consumer representative because it allows me to give my perspective on how a patient can give input into the way RBWH can achieve greater results with regard to patient care. Also, I am giving back to the hospital that saved my life.

I have enjoyed the way that my input has been received and acted upon and I encourage others to also participate in the Consumer Advisory Group because it allows a consumer to voice their concerns and feedback and add value to RBWH.



RBWH Foundation – COVID-19 Research

In March of this year, when the devastating COVID-19 pandemic was only just starting to make an impact on Australians and people around the world, RBWH Foundation launched the Coronavirus Action Fund.

Donations to the fund have enabled our world-leading RBWH clinical researchers to join the global race against COVID-19.

Now as infection rates once again begin to increase nationally, community-based funding of vital research and preventative projects is our country's best defence.

Donations from RBWH Foundation's Coronavirus Action Fund are already being used to test antibody-rich convalescent plasma as a possible treatment for coronavirus and to develop preventative programs such as a mobile phone app for healthcare workers in aged care facilities. Donations will also be used to investigate the effect of COVID-related changes, such as the use of Telehealth in patient treatment and care.

Some of the projects may change the way specialists deliver medication, screen pregnant women and assist patients to remain connected with families and friends during periods of hospital lockdown.

When those changes occur, RBWH Foundation donors should take pride in their contribution to science nationally and internationally.

Metro North is proud to recognise the cultural diversity of our community. We recognise and pay respect to the Turrbal, Dalungbara/Djoondaburri, Gubbi Gubbi/Kabi Kabi, Jagera/Yuggera/Ugarapul, Jinibara/Jiniburi, Ninghi and Undumbi People of Metro North Hospital and Health Service area, on whose lands we walk, work, talk and live. We also acknowledge and pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders both past and present.

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Your Voice @ The Royal newsletter is written by RBWH consumers/patients for consumers and the community as a whole. If you have any content suggestions or articles that you'd like to see in this newsletter, please contact RBWH_CE@health.qld.gov.au.



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