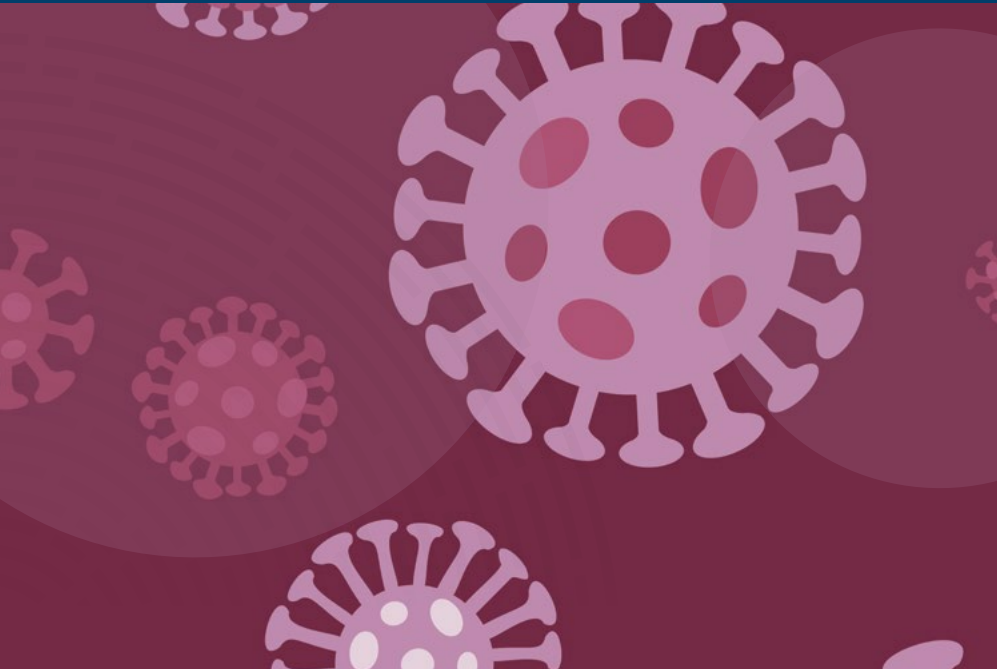


Network Link

March 2020



LATEST NEWS: Coronavirus information for GPs

In December 2019, an outbreak of a novel coronavirus (COVID-19), began in Wuhan City, Hubei Province with symptoms ranging from a mild cough to pneumonia. Some people recover easily, others may get very sick very quickly.

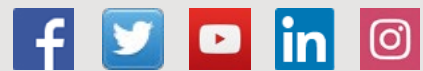
No vaccine or specific treatment is currently available but medical care can treat most symptoms. There is evidence that it spreads from person to person. Good hygiene can prevent infection.

Clinicians should be on alert for symptoms—including fevers, difficulty breathing, coughs and sore throats—in anyone who has visited mainland China and should report suspected cases to the **Metro North Public Health Unit on 07 3624 1111** during business hours and to the **Public Health Physician (on call after hours) on 07 3646 1699**.

A cautious approach to infection control is recommended including standard, contact and airborne precautions and asking people suspected of having the infection to wear a surgical mask.

Thanks to those who came to the PHN's recent coronavirus information sessions. For those who could not attend, the information on the next page offers a summary of the topics and resources discussed at these sessions.

Continued on page 2



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phn
BRISBANE NORTH

An Australian Government Initiative

Newly available resources

Coronavirus page now live on HealthPathways

A dedicated coronavirus HealthPathways page has been created, offering guidance for general practices on case identification, recommendations for management and links to relevant resources all in one place.

- Access the coronavirus HealthPathways page at brisbanenorth.healthpathways.org
- For login details contact the PHN on **07 3630 7300**.

Video: What GPs need to know

Dr Jeannette Young, Chief Health Officer Queensland Health and Dr Dilip Dhupelia, President AMA Queensland, provide an update on the current situation including answers to GPs' most pressing questions in this joint video.

- Watch the video on the Queensland Health website at www.health.qld.gov.au.

GP management flowchart for novel coronavirus

This Queensland Health flow chart is designed to assist Queensland GPs with the assessment and management of patients presenting to GP practices with suspected novel coronavirus.

- Download the flowchart at www.health.qld.gov.au.

Specimen collection information

Pathology providers QML and Sullivan Nicolaides have published information on the collection centres in the region that have the capacity to test for coronavirus.

Please note, public health approval is no longer required to request testing, however in very high-risk patients the relevant public health unit still requests early clinical notification of a suspect case even prior to test results being available.

Additionally, testing is also available at all five public hospitals in the North Brisbane and Moreton Bay region.

- QML collection centres can be found at www.qml.com.au.
- Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology collection centres can be found at www.snp.com.au.

Access to surgical masks

The Department of Health is providing access to a limited stockpile of surgical masks for general practices and pharmacies. As supplies are limited, PHNs have been given the role of distributing surgical masks to practices and pharmacies with a demonstrated need, for example:

- where there is no local supply available commercially
- where practices or pharmacies have a population which may be more likely to have been exposed to the novel coronavirus
- where practices or pharmacies have an unusual number of patients presenting with respiratory symptoms.

Surgical masks should be used for patients who present to general practice or pharmacies with suspected novel coronavirus and practice staff who are at risk of exposure.

If your practice or pharmacy requires surgical masks email aimie.thomson@brisbanenorthphn.org.au.

Further information

The Department of Health will provide regular updates as more information on this situation becomes available:

www.health.gov.au.

Brisbane North PHN will continue to provide the latest information on novel coronavirus.

For more information contact your Primary Care Liaison Officer on 07 3630 7300 or email info@brisbanenorthphn.org.au.

ABOUT NETWORK LINK

For submissions and advertising or to subscribe, visit brisbanenorthphn.org.au/page/publications.

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Above: Sherice Ansell at the UQ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit sashing ceremony in 2019. Photo courtesy of *UQ Communications*.

GP Smart Referrals rolling out now

Metro North Hospital and Health Service (Metro North HHS) is preparing to implement GP Smart Referrals, through a phased approach, commencing in March 2020.

GP Smart Referrals allows general practices to send referrals electronically through to the Metro North HHS electronic referrals Workflow Solution (eReferrals). This will enable faster, streamlined management of referrals and less double handling of referrals across our health service.

The Metro North HHS Service project team is working closely with the PHN, administration and clinical teams involved in referrals management to ensure we understand any impacts on local processes and systems.

To ensure your practice is ready to start using Smart Referrals contact your Primary Care Liaison Officer or email GPSR@brisbanenorthphn.org.au.

Key benefits for GPs include:

- ability to attach any supporting documents, including pathology tests and imaging reports
- aligned with state-wide referral guidelines to prompt essential referral information required to triage, decreasing the number of referrals returned for additional clinical information
- integrated with a service directory to ensure the appropriate speciality closest to the patient's address is identified.

New graduate reflects on a conference that connects

University of Queensland (UQ) medical student, Sherice Ansell was the recipient of the PHN's annual sponsorship, which saw her attend the 2019 Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) conference in Darwin.

Ms Ansell, who graduated from UQ at the end of 2019, is a Central/Eastern Arrernte and Anmatyerre woman from Mparntwe (Alice Springs). Ms Ansell said being in the culturally safe space of the AIDA conference allowed her to expand and refine the skills gained throughout her studies.

"I participated in workshops with experienced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous doctors and attended workshops across a range of different topics including trauma scenarios and cultural workshops," Ms Ansell said.

Ms Ansell sung the praises of conference presenter, ENT surgeon Kelvin Kong. "He is not only an amazing speaker, but his workshop provided valuable information and practical skills when assessing children's ear health."

Importantly the conference provided attendees with a culturally safe professional development and networking opportunity. "(The conference) gave attendees an opportunity to talk about personal and professional problems faced throughout our studies (and in our) workplaces and gave us the opportunity to brainstorm possible solutions for these problems," she said.

Ms Ansell intends on attending the AIDA conference again at the end of 2020. "I look forward to attending as an intern; I can continue building my own personal network and be part of the ever-growing number of Indigenous doctors across Australia."

Benefits of using the My Mental Health Services eReferral:

- provides a **single point** of referral into a wide range of free mental health, alcohol and other drugs and suicide prevention services for both adults and children
- provides a **quick and easy way** to navigate PHN commissioned mental health, alcohol and other drugs and suicide prevention services, with service information and referral requirements kept automatically up-to-date
- **automatically populates** with information about the patient from medical practice software (when referral is completed using GP Integrator with Best Practice or Medical Director)
- uses patient information and a few questions to suggest the **most appropriate service** for the patient
- provides **timely feedback on referral status** via secure electronic notifications
- prompts service providers to send **progress reports to the GP**.



Brisbane MIND Plus eReferral has changed

Brisbane MIND Plus eReferral has changed and will now be known as My Mental Health Services eReferral. This change comes in response to confusion surrounding the range of referral options, which are not limited to only Brisbane MIND services.

It is anticipated the name change will help GPs offer appropriate referrals for patients across the wide range of Brisbane North PHN commissioned mental health, alcohol and other drugs and suicide prevention services that extend beyond the Brisbane MIND services.

The updated eReferral form will also include new assessment fields, which are in line with the Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) guidance (for more information see article on page 5). These changes also allow practitioners to nominate their preferred type of care in the eReferral form.

These eReferral changes will be effective immediately. Changes to the eReferral form will be made automatically however, **renaming the template in your clinical software will require a manual update** on each user's computer. Your Primary Care Liaison Officer can support you to make this change.

Within the My Mental Health Services eReferral, GPs can refer patients to the following services:

- **brief therapy** services (NewAccess, Optimal Health Program, Wise Choices, Sunshine Parenting Program and Problem Management Plus)
- **psychological therapies** (Brisbane MIND4KiDS, Brisbane MIND–people at risk of suicide, Brisbane MIND–Culturally

and Linguistically Diverse communities, Brisbane MIND–LGBTIQ+, Brisbane MIND–people with a history of trauma or abuse and Brisbane MIND Geographical Isolated Regions (Kilcoy and Bribie Island)

- **severe and complex mental illness** (mental health hubs: The Recovery and Discovery Centre, The Living and Learning Centre and Floresco Caboolture).

There are no out of pocket expense for clients to access PHN commissioned mental health, alcohol and other drugs and suicide prevention services. Clients will need to meet an eligibility criteria, however there are no GP caps to refer into these services.

GPs can access all of these services for their patients in *Best Practice* and *Medical Director* practice software or via HealthPathways for GPs using other medical practice software.

Practices with *Best Practice* or *Medical Director* can contact Redbourne on 1800 783 336 to arrange secure installation of the GP Integrator. Once installed, your Primary Care Liaison Officer can install the template and demonstrate the eReferral process.

To find out more contact the My Mental Health Service Navigation Team on 1800 752 235.



2020

**International
year of the
nurse and
midwife**

Farewell to trailblazing nurse Aunty Pamela

2020 is the international year of the nurse and midwife and throughout the year the PHN is paying tribute to nurses and midwives that inspire. This month we're celebrating the life and legacy of inspirational pioneer of the health sector, Aunty Pamela Mam.

In January, trailblazing leader Aunty Pamela Mam passed away after more than 60 years working to improving the health and wellbeing outcomes of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

Aunty Pamela Mam (nee Ah-kee/Bligh), a pioneer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services, was born in 1938 in Richmond, western Queensland, and was a descendent of the Kuku Yalanji peoples in the Cooktown area.

She started her remarkable career as a nurse aid at Palm Island Hospital, and later trained as a nurse at Townsville Hospital, becoming one of the first Aboriginal nurses in Queensland.

Aunty Pamela helped establish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) Brisbane, and in 2015, Griffith University established the Aunty Pamela Mam Indigenous Nursing Scholarship to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing and midwifery students.

She was awarded an honorary doctorate from Griffith University in December 2018 for her service to her people in health services and to the community and named as a life member of the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council and ATSICHS Brisbane, and patron for the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health.

Aunty Pamela was an inspirational figure who created an ongoing legacy of compassion and commitment for health care for First Nations Queenslanders.

For more information on the Aunty Pamela Mam Indigenous Nursing Scholarship visit bnphn.org/APM-nursing-scholarship.

Initial Assessment and Referral guidance for mental health

Brisbane North PHN is participating in the trial of an initiative designed to aid referrers in determining the best level of care for their clients.

A new functionality, now available via the My Mental Health Services eReferral on rediCASE, incorporates the Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) guidance, which aims to maximise the efficiency and accuracy of mental health referrals across the stepped care continuum.

The guidance features an additional four assessment areas (eight assessment areas will now be available) to rate an individual's presentation, and a decision support logic calculates the appropriate level of care. These domains include symptom severity, risk of harm, co-morbidity and functioning.

To support the trial, the PHN will host a workshop for any GPs or referrers who wish to provide feedback on the IAR initiative. This feedback will assist the University of Melbourne as they conduct a national evaluation of IAR.

To RSVP for the workshop or for more information contact Evaluation and Reporting Officer, Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs team, Carla Taylor on 07 3630 7331 or carla.taylor@brisbanenorthphn.org.au.



“Every time I look at each of these pieces of art I see a new part of the story, I see something that I haven’t seen before. They generate emotion, they generate discussion and they generate hope and love.”

PHN staff joined Queensland Council for LGBTI Health staff, as well as campaign artists and supporters at the Talking Heals launch in February.

Talking can be healing in a crisis

Suicide prevention campaign launch showcases local artists

Art can be a powerful way to share stories, so the work of local artists features prominently in a new suicide prevention campaign aimed at LGBTIQ+ communities in Brisbane North.

Launched on 6 February 2020 in Newstead, Talking Heals is a Queensland Council for LGBTI Health (formerly Queensland AIDS Council) campaign funded through the National Suicide Prevention Trial (NSPT).

Talking Heals campaign messaging acknowledges that sharing stories of suicide can be hard and encourages LGBTIQ+, ‘Sistergirl’ and ‘Brotherboy’ (SGBB) people at risk of suicide to connect with specialist services.

The campaign has a community education focus, but will also support capacity building in the suicide prevention sector.

Suicide prevention project officer Ged Farmer has worked closely with Queensland Council for LGBTI Health and their priority communities to support Brisbane North PHN’s local implementation of the NSPT.

He spoke at the launch about Talking Heals and Yarns Heal, a campaign with similar messaging, specifically designed by and for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ SGBB communities, and how they have reset the language we use to talk about suicide.

“For many, many years, speaking about suicide was just

something people didn’t want to do and didn’t do,” Ged said.

“If someone was going through a tough time and they mentioned suicide, the conversation was often shut down,” he said.

“This meant that people needing or wanting to talk about what they were going through were often unable to, and this in turn presents further barriers to accessing support.”

“The Talking Heals campaign is allowing us pathways to share our lived experiences of suicide and an opportunity to share our own personal stories of suicide and to have wider discussions around suicide,” he explained.

Ged thanked the many project partner organisations and individuals, reserving special mention for the artists involved in both campaigns.

The artists’ contributions, Ged said, “allow us a visual of the narrative, they allow us to reflect and they allow us to talk in ways about suicide that we’ve never done before”.

“Every time I look at each of these pieces of art I see a new part of the story, I see something that I haven’t seen before. They generate emotion, they generate discussion and they generate hope and love,” he said.

For more information, go to www.talkingheals.org.au or www.yarnsheal.com.au.



Our stories: Offering new parents a ray of sunshine

Each month in Our stories, we're presenting a snapshot of services based off the perspectives of both service users and service providers. This month's service profile focuses on the Sunshine Parenting Program (SPP), a six-week postnatal wellbeing program for mothers who are struggling with their mental health, run by Brisbane's Peach Tree Perinatal Wellness Inc.

SPP was designed by two Brisbane mums, Viv Kissane and Rani Farmer who both have first-hand experience of perinatal challenges. Viv's experiences with perinatal mental illness encouraged her to establish Peach Tree Perinatal Wellness Inc in 2011. 'I'm the mother of three children, and I experienced firsthand the devastating impact of perinatal mental illness,' said Viv. 'I was determined to offer other parents the support I wish I'd had. I established Peach Tree to provide compassionate, peer-led services and education.'

'Our home here at Peach Tree House is like a parent wellbeing centre,' said Viv. 'We offer peer-support programs, education, and social-inclusion activities like yoga, music and art. Most of our staff are volunteers and the majority of our services are free. It's a friendly, welcoming and non-judgemental space for parents and babies.'

SPP is delivered across six sessions by peer-support workers. The first and last sessions involve individual discussions and one-on-one support with the SPP program manager and a psychologist. SPP is an early-intervention program for parents who are doing it tough but who may not have a diagnosis of mental illness. It's designed to build emotional resilience and promote self-care.

'We don't require our participants to have a diagnosed condition or a formal referral from a GP,' said Rani. 'This isn't a diagnostic program with clinical assessments and outcomes. It's an empathic environment designed to promote emotional wellness and parenting confidence.'

Rani is convinced that SPP is having a positive impact on the lives of mothers. 'It might sound a bit corny, but I really do believe this program can bring a little ray of sunshine into parents' lives, right when they need it most.'

The program in a nutshell

Name: Sunshine Parenting Program

Provider: Peach Tree Perinatal Wellness Inc

Service type: Brief therapy, community-based peer education for parents experiencing postnatal mental health challenges

Service duration: Six-week program that includes four group sessions and two individual sessions with a psychologist

Information for GPs on textured breast implants

In August 2019, Allergan recalled their un-implanted BIOCELL textured breast implants and tissue expanders from the Australian market after a review found the devices have a small risk of causing Breast Implant Associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (BIA-ALCL).

On 28 November 2019, the TGA imposed further regulatory action in relation to ALL breast implants and tissue expanders currently available in Australia, resulting in the suspension of some textured breast implant products, and stricter safety and quality controls on all other breast implants and tissue expanders remaining available for use in Australia.

Internationally, a number of women with textured breast implants have been diagnosed with the rarely occurring BIA-ALCL. The main symptoms of BIA-ALCL include swelling in the breast, and less commonly, lump formation in the breast or armpit. Implants which have a smooth surface have not been associated with BIA-ALCL.

Although the risk of BIA-ALCL is very low, Queensland Health is notifying all women who have been identified as having received textured breast implants or tissue expanders associated with increased risk of BIA-ALCL through the Queensland public health system. Where GP details are known, they will be sent a letter and GP information sheet to assist consultation and referral should this be necessary.

Women are advised to consult their doctor if symptoms develop, if any changes are noticed on self-examination, or if they have any concerns. If signs or symptoms are present, arrange an ultrasound (+/- aspirate), where possible. Testing for BIA-ALCL is only recommended if symptoms are present. Because BIA-ALCL is rare, experts do not recommend removal of breast implants where there are no problems with the implant.

For information about the recall and risks of breast implants visit bnphn.org/BIA-ALCL.

News from Metro North Public Health Unit

The Metro North Public Health Unit focuses on protecting the community from communicable diseases and other illnesses, as well as promoting health and wellbeing. For further information on any of the updates below contact 07 3624 1111.

Who's immune to hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B vaccination has been part of the childhood immunisation program since 2000 with all Australian children recommended a four-dose schedule at birth, two, four and six months of age. In 2017, 95 per cent of Australian one-year-olds were fully vaccinated against hepatitis B.

However, many young adults may be at risk of becoming infected including:

- **Australians born prior to 2000**
- **those in close contact with someone with hepatitis B**
- **migrants from hepatitis B endemic countries.**

Hepatitis B vaccine is funded under the National Immunisation Program for the following groups if they are non-immune or not previously vaccinated:

- household or other close (household-like) contacts of people with hepatitis B
- sexual contacts of people with hepatitis B
- migrants (who have a Medicare card) from hepatitis B endemic countries
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people with chronic liver disease and/or hepatitis C
- people who inject drugs.

Metro North Public Health Unit recommends opportunistic vaccination against hepatitis B for these groups. For more information visit www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation/health-professionals.

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News in brief

▶ Services Australia

In February, the Department of Human Services, responsible for delivering a range of welfare, health, child support payments and other services to the people of Australia, became Services Australia.

Services Australia will deliver social security services through government programs and brands like Centrelink, Medicare, the PBS and Hearing Australia. Australian citizens and permanent residents can access many of these services through their national myGov account.

The department was renamed 'Services Australia' by Prime Minister Scott Morrison in May 2019 following the 2019 federal election.

For more information visit www.servicesaustralia.gov.au.

▶ Healthdirect Risk Checker

Healthdirect Australia recently launched the healthdirect Risk Checker, an online preventive health tool.

Developed in collaboration with The George Institute for Global Health, this free, user-friendly tool helps people understand their risk of developing heart disease, kidney disease and type 2 diabetes.

A factsheet has been developed for health professionals, explaining what the Risk Checker is, the evidence-base for the tool and how it can be used in practice.

Find out more and download the factsheet here: bnphn.org/riskchecker.

▶ Veteran Health Check

The Veteran Health Check is an opportunity for veterans to access a comprehensive physical and mental health assessment and encourages early intervention to promote better health outcomes for veterans during their transition to civilian life.

The Department of Veteran Affairs recommends that at least 45-minutes is scheduled to conduct a Veteran Health Check.

For more information visit bnphn.org/veteranhealthcheck.

▶ Mental wellbeing campaign

The Queensland Government has launched a new campaign, Dear Mind, encouraging all Queenslanders to make time for themselves and prioritise their mental wellbeing.

Taking some 'me time' helps strengthen mental wellbeing, lifts mood, improves relationships and helps in dealing with difficult situations. Evidence has also shown positive mental wellbeing can help prevent behavioural and mental health problems, and act as an important 'buffer' to the risk of mental illness.

Dear Mind encourages all Queenslanders to create a healthier relationship with their mind by making small changes to their daily routine to include simple, everyday activities such as spending time with family and friends, learning new things, being active and spending time in nature.

For more information visit qld.gov.au/mentalwellbeing.



Federal Member visit in Caboolture

Our CEO Abbe Anderson and Deputy CEO Libby Dunstan met with the Federal Member for Longman, Terry Young MP, for the first time in late January at his office in Caboolture. We regularly visit elected representatives right across our region to brief them on new PHN initiatives and commissioned services that benefit their constituents.

Noticeboard

Please contact the relevant organisation for more information about the items below.

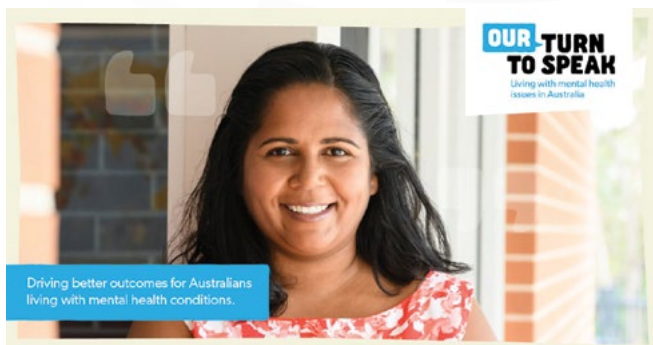
Atrial fibrillation detection study

Researchers from the University of Wollongong want to talk to GPs about atrial fibrillation (AF) screening practices and the direct-to-consumer technologies being used for AF detection.

Researchers are especially interested in implications for under or over diagnosis of AF. Please note, this study is not funded by Apple or any other commercial interest.

Participation involves a 45 minute interview by phone. For more information contact Dr Patti Shih via afib-study@uow.edu.au or call 02 4221 4546.

Our turn to speak survey closing soon



The survey will investigate the lived experiences – both positive and negative – of people who have experienced complex mental health issues in the last 12 months. SANE Australia's Anne Deveson Research Centre (ADRC), in partnership with the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences (MSPS) at the University of Melbourne is seeking 7,000 people aged 18 and over to participate in the survey.

SANE's goal is to make a difference in the lives of people affected by complex mental health issues through support, research and advocacy.

Following a short (approximately five minutes) eligibility screening process, participants will be asked to complete the survey. The survey will take about 30 minutes and can be completed online right now, or over the phone.

To see if you or someone you know is eligible to participate visit ourturntospeak.com.au.

Community workshop for suicide bereavement

Brisbane StandBy – Support After Suicide are hosting a free community workshop in Zillmere on Monday 20 April, to facilitate conversations on suicide and bereavement, and share learnings about supporting those bereaved or impacted by suicide.

Topics covered:

- suicide and bereavement psychoeducation
- guest speakers from police, ambulance, coronial counselling service, and funeral service
- lived experience perspective
- resources and support available
- healing yarning circles
- self-care.

Lunch and morning tea will be provided. For more information or to RSVP call 0438 150 180 or email standby.bne@uccommunity.org.au.

My Visit to the Doctor: a book for kids

The book series created by a local Brisbane GP, Dr Rani Ginige, is for children to read while they wait to see their doctor or in anticipation of a visit to their GP.

It aims to decrease the anxiety and fear that can be associated with seeing a GP. A number of paediatric units and emergency departments in South East QLD have purchased the first book in the series, 'My Visit to Hospital'.



'My Visit to the Doctor' is the latest edition being promoted for general practice and outpatient settings. For preview of the book visit www.facebook.com/medicalcreations4kids or for more information contact Rani Ginige on 0402 852 187 or email medicalcreations4kids@gmail.com.

What's on elsewhere

Please contact the relevant organisation for more information about these events. Note, these are not Brisbane North PHN events.

For more events, visit brisbanenorthphn.org.au/page/news-and-events/events.

In the community

1-31 Epilepsy awareness month

1-7 Hearing awareness week

26 Purple day for epilepsy

March

05 Maternal fetal medicine and basics of obstetric medicine conference – Metro North Hospital and Health Service

Herston, Qld

e boomdays@health.qld.gov.au

05 Dementia Essentials: Provide support to people living with dementia – Dementia Australia

North Lakes, Qld

e qld.education@dementia.org.au

05 Applied suicide intervention skills training – The Wholistic Being

Warner, Qld

e lucy@thewholisticbeing.com.au

05 Support after suicide workshop for funeral sector – Standby-Support After Suicide

Chermside, Qld

e standby.bne@ucommunity.org.au

10-11 Accreditation insights into RACGP 5th edition update, support and resources – AAPM

North Lakes, Qld

e events@AAPM.org.au

13 Dimensions of palliative care: Communications challenges – The Qld Palliative Care Spirituality Group

Herston, Qld

e suecolen@gmail.com

20 Parkinson's disease and device assisted therapy education day – Metro North Hospital and Health Service

Herston, Qld

t 07 3646 1525

21 Hepatitis C new treatments course – ASHM

Bowen Hills, Qld

e samantha.bolton@ashm.org.au

27 Introduction to working therapeutically with complex trauma clients – Blue Knot Foundation

Brisbane City, Qld

e learn@blueknot.org.au

31 Men's grief workshop – Standby: Support After Suicide

Chermside, Qld

e standby.bne@ucommunity.org.au

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EKCO Hand Highlights: Spotlight on Trigger Finger



Trigger finger, also known as stenosing flexor tenosynovitis, is a common condition of the hand occurring in approximately 2-3% of the population. It may cause pain and functional limitation particularly during manipulation tasks (e.g. buttons and coins) and power gripping, with resulting decreased grip strength and dexterity.

Trigger finger often occurs at the tunnel formed by the metacarpal neck and A1 pulley (volar aspect of MCPJ) and it has been suggested that there is a discrepancy in size between the flexor tendon and A1 pulley as a result of inflammation or thickening of the tissues.

Over time, a tender nodule may develop on the palm of the hand at the base of the affected finger which may cause significant pain and 'catching' or locking of the digit. The middle and ring fingers are most commonly affected, however triggering can occur in any digit including the thumb.

Trigger finger most commonly affects middle aged women with the dominant hand being more at risk. It often co-exists with other disorders such as carpal tunnel syndrome, DeQuervain's tenosynovitis and diabetes.

At EKCO Hand Therapy, our experienced Hand Therapists will assess the severity of the presenting trigger finger and implement a program specific to the patient's condition. Therapy will usually involve:

- Custom splinting: to limit flexion at the affected joint, usually the MCPJ (this can be used in combination with an ultrasound-guided corticosteroid injection)
- Oedema management
- Activity modification: Patient specific task analysis to identify activities both at home and in the workplace that may be contributing factors
- Exercise: Graded return to full active ROM and strength based tasks

EKCO Hand Therapy has 8 primary clinics across the greater Brisbane area

NORTHSIDE CLINICS

P: 07 3350 5172

E: Chermside@ekco.com.au

A: 4/738 Gympie Rd, **Chermside**

A: Suite 11, George St, **Kippa-ring**

W: www.ekco.com.au



GP bulletin – March 2020

News from General Practice Liaison Officers at Brisbane North PHN and Metro North Hospital and Health Service.

Please provide feedback to the GPLO program mngplo@health.qld.gov.au.

HealthPathways update

Newly released HealthPathways:

- eating disorders treatment plan
- assessing genetic risk
- pandemic respiratory illness
- novel coronavirus information.

To submit feedback about HealthPathways, please contact administration.integration@brisbanenorthphn.org.au.

Login at: brisbanenorth.communityhealthpathways.org or phone 07 3630 7300 for login details.

Upcoming GP education

- **19 March**—Haematology shared care—The Prince Charles Hospital Education Centre
- **2 April**—Children and adolescent mental health—The Prince Charles Hospital Education Centre

To provide suggestions for future events, or to request a practice visit to hear the latest information from your local hospitals and the PHN please email the GP Liaison Team at mngplo@health.qld.gov.au.

Missed a GP education event?

Slides from our recent GP education events are now available online at <http://bit.ly/mngpedu>.

Antibiotic Allergy Assessment Service

The Antibiotic Allergy Assessment Service, formally known as the Penicillin Allergy Clinic, is running at The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, accepting referrals for all patients with a documented penicillin allergy.

To make a referral to our service please make sure you select Infectious Diseases – Dr Andrew Redmond on the referral system and clearly state that the patient is for penicillin allergy assessment.

Enquires may also be made to Infectious Disease Reception on **07 3646 8761** or via antibioticallergy@health.qld.gov.au.

Interested in aged care?

Are you interested in working in a team committed to providing high quality, person-centred and individualised residential aged care?

Community and Oral Health (Metro North HHS) is seeking GPs to join the care teams at:

- Cooina House, 60 George St, Kippa Ring and
- Gannet House, Brighton Health Campus, 449 Beaconsfield Terrace, Brighton.

Both facilities are fully compliant with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Standards.

For more information contact Belinda Sawtell on **0436 350 760** or belinda.sawtell@health.qld.gov.au or Dr Keren Harvey on **0436 660 254** or keren.harvey@health.qld.gov.au.

Vale Dr Mark Craig: A warrior for rural medicine

The PHN is saddened to hear of the passing of Dr Mark Craig who was a founding member of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine.

Dr Craig worked tirelessly in several fields of medicine and academia and most recently had been practising at his 'Back Doctor' clinics in Milton and Southport.

The PHN sends sincerest condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Dr Craig.

COVID-19 information for GPs

Thanks to those who came to the PHN's recent coronavirus information sessions.

For those who could not attend, **please see article on page 1** for further information, including a summary of the topics discussed at these sessions.

GP Smart Referrals rolling out now

Metro North Hospital and Health Service is preparing to implement GP Smart Referrals, through a phased approach, commencing in March 2020.

For more information see article on page 3.

Information for GPs on textured breast implants

For information about the recall and risks of breast implants **see article on page 7.**