

Thursday, 11 July 2019

Avoid the crowd and access after hours medical advice from home

Brisbane North PHN Emergency Alternatives campaign – 2019

Busy emergency rooms are not always your best option if you are sick or injured after hours.

The timely reminder issued by Brisbane North PHN as part of the Emergency Alternatives campaign aims to increase the community's awareness of after hours medical services.

With emergency departments (ED) across Brisbane experiencing a surge of patients in recent months, Emergency Alternatives reminds patients to think twice before visiting the ED.

Brisbane North PHN Board Chair and GP Dr Anita Green said the campaign's message is as important now as it was when Emergency Alternatives first launched in 2016.

"It's a relevant message and now more than ever after hours medical advice is so easy to access. You can start by checking your symptoms or talking to a nurse—all without leaving your own home.

"Patients seeking after hours urgent medical care for minor ailments will find it is easier and usually a lot quicker to call an after hours GP, instead of waiting at busy hospitals," she said.

Recent Queensland Health data shows there have been more than 4,800 influenza notifications in the Brisbane North and Moreton Bay region in 2019; four times the year to date average for the last five years.

Dr Green said these figures alone are a good reason to avoid the emergency department.

"With notification rates as high as they have been this year, the emergency department will be feeling the strain. The hospital ED is for patients needing emergency or life-saving treatment, so it's best to avoid it if your condition could be better managed by a GP," Dr Green said.

Metro North Hospital and Health Service Executive Director of Emergency Medicine and Access Coordination, Dr Chris May said patients who need acute care will always be prioritised, regardless of arrival time.

"Our clinicians and nurses can be exceptionally busy in winter due to flu presentations, winter sports injuries, respiratory infections, burns sustained from heaters, right through to things like poisoning, trauma and pain," Dr May said.

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“The emergency department is always the best place in an emergency and while we are dedicated to seeing all patients and will not turn anyone away, if your situation is not an emergency, you may have to wait longer,” he said.

Launched in June 2019, the campaign advertising directs people to a website where they can access the Health Direct symptom-checker, talk to a nurse, find a GP or make a plan for the next time someone in their household needs medical advice after hours.

To visit the campaign website, go to www.emergencyalternatives.org.au.

ENDS

Campaign Supporter:

Metro North
Hospital and Health Service



Queensland
Government

Editor's note:

For press a quality portrait photo of Dr Anita Green, go to:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/r3mh75ue7ipzqnx/AACb7sbzYCuk2gXZo9OX_EC8a?dl=0

About Brisbane North PHN

Brisbane North PHN is one of 31 Primary Health Networks nationwide and supports clinicians and communities within North Brisbane, Moreton Bay and parts of the Somerset region. The PHN covers approximately 4,100 km² of urban, regional and rural areas, with a population of over 960,000.

The key objectives of the PHN are:

- increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, and
- improving coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

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