

1 June 2022

## One million vaccinations – one million stories

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### **GPs reach milestone in delivery of COVID-19 vaccinations**

More than a million COVID-19 vaccinations have been administered in the North Brisbane and Moreton Bay region since February 2021 through the huge and dedicated efforts of 268 general practices.

With the inclusion of vaccines administered through GP-run respiratory clinics and other primary health care services (e.g., pharmacy and First Nations health services), primary care has delivered over 1.5 million COVID-19 vaccines in the region since the start of the vaccine roll out in February last year. This figure equates to 67.5%—or more than to two-thirds—of all vaccines administered in the region.

Brisbane North PHN has played a pivotal role to support primary health care providers to accomplish this mammoth task and achieve this significant milestone to help keep our community safe during the pandemic.

“General Practice managers, doctors, nurses, admin staff and all primary care staff showed tremendous resilience to meet the many challenges during the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out,” said Brisbane North PHN CEO Libby Dunstan.

Challenges included PPE shortages, vaccine supply shortages and evolving messaging around eligibility criteria that left General Practices scrambling to keep up with moving goal posts.

“General Practice staff throughout the Brisbane North PHN region have shown great commitment to manage mass vaccination. They have persevered despite stretched resources to accomplish this; all the while transitioning to telehealth, managing usual care and supporting patients with COVID-19,” said Ms Dunstan.

Shabnam Ali and her sister Nargis Bidgood are business managers at the Anchor Medical practices in the North Brisbane and north-west Brisbane area who set up pop-up clinics outside the practices to immunise up to 1500 patients over three hours in a smooth-running production line.

“We are a general practice that has vaccinated huge numbers,” said Shabnam. “All general practices should be acknowledged for this achievement.

“A lot goes on behind-the-scenes to vaccinate 1500 patients! We proved we can do big numbers,” said Shabnam. “We can immunise a lot of people. We know we can do it again if needed.”

Small numbers matter too, and some general practices have gone above and beyond the call of duty to support the immunisation of the most vulnerable in our community who are often forgotten.

Dr Deborah Mills runs The Travel Doctor clinic in Brisbane City. Collectively staff conducted many home visits to vaccinate people who could not leave their homes: one doctor, one nurse, packing gear and traveling—equating to well over one hour’s time—to vaccinate one person.

“People were desperate for the vaccine,” said Dr Mills “We got calls because people thought we were a mobile clinic. People were stuck, bed-ridden or homebound and wanted to be vaccinated.”

Dr Mills also received a call from Micah Projects to help vaccinate the homeless in our community.

“We set up on the porch of a boarding house in Spring Hill. We worked off our laptops. It started to get dark and there was no light on the porch, I thought: ‘This must be happening all over the world, doctors and nurses vaccinating people in difficult circumstances.’

“Each person was so different, and each person had a story. Homeless people. People who had just got out of prison.

“Other GPs made home visits too. It really was such a great team effort by all doctors and their teams, all doing what they could.

“It’s a big job! One million vaccinations—one million stories.”

Data for the Brisbane North PHN region shows the COVID-19 vaccine job is not yet done, with parts of the community still registering low rates. For example, only 41.4% of children aged 5 to 11 years have been double vaccinated. And helping the community to get the flu vaccination is an ongoing, important role for primary health care services.

### ENDS ###

## Data breakdown:

- Brisbane North PHN covers areas north of the Brisbane River including parts of the Brisbane City Local Government Area, Moreton Bay Local Government Area and parts of the Somerset Local Government Area (Kilcoy).
- North Brisbane and Moreton Bay region has a general population of approximately 1,064,893 people
- From Feb 2021 – mid-May 2022, the approximate figures for COVID-19 vaccinations administered across the Brisbane North PHN region were:

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- Over 1.5 million vaccines administered across all primary care services (includes Pharmacy, General Practices, GP Respiratory Clinics, and First Nations Health Services). This is approximately 67% of all vaccines administered within this region.
- Of this primary care services total:
  - General Practices administered approximately 1,012,138 vaccinations (44.3% of all vaccinations within region).
  - Over 54% of total vaccinations within the region were administered by General Practice and GP Respiratory Clinics
- 268 General Practices plus 4 GP Respiratory Clinics have been involved in administering COVID-19 vaccinations in the Brisbane North PHN region

**Editor's note:**

For high quality images go to:

<https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/brisbane-north-phn/media/Dr-Deb-Travel-Doctor-micah-higher-res.jpg>

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For interviews or any further information, please contact the Brisbane North PHN Public Relations Officer Grania Kelly at [grania.kelly@brisbanenorthphn.org.au](mailto:grania.kelly@brisbanenorthphn.org.au) or on 07-3630 7330.



Caption:

*Doctor Deb The Travel Doctor staff set up a mobile clinic to vaccinate the homeless and vulnerable in the community.*

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## 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 km<sup>2</sup> of urban, regional and rural areas, with a population of over one million.

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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