New model bringing care closer to home

A NEWLY-ESTABLISHED model of care is delivering flexible and multidisciplinary care to Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service patients – including in their own homes – while helping to reduce lengths of stay and the need for hospital admissions.

The WBHHS Integrated Care Access Team (iCAT) is using a holistic approach to providing care for patients with chronic illnesses, focusing on wellness and community management, and ending the cycle of repeat emergency admissions and hospitalisations.

iCAT is made up of work streams including nurse practitioners, Nurse Navigators, diabetes education, Aged Care Assessment, Rehabilitation Team, Hospital In The Home, medical, nursing and allied health professionals, to best support patients needing frequent sub-acute care.

Wide Bay Hospital and Health Board Chair Peta Jamieson said iCAT was a great demonstration of key goals in WBHHS’s strategic plan, Care Comes First... Through Patients’ Eyes, including enhancing holistic health care and early intervention.

“The iCAT model is all about providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place – acknowledging that this sometimes isn’t inside the walls of a hospital,” Peta said.

By delivering proactive and agile care to patients with chronic diseases, iCAT aims to reduce overall preventable hospital admissions and also manage conditions earlier so they don’t end up as acute presentations down the track.

Have a story to share? Email the Media and Communications team.
“It’s also about encouraging people to manage their conditions better at home or in the community, and to take steps to improve their own wellness.

“Given our region has higher proportions of older people and incidences of chronic illness than state averages, modern models of care like these are crucial.”

WBHHS Chief Executive Debbie Carroll said the establishment of iCAT was part of a move to rethink the way health care was delivered.

“Up until now, we’ve probably tended to think hospital care first, community care after. But under this model, we want to be thinking of iCAT first, if appropriate, and hospital care only if it’s necessary,” Debbie said.

“As well as having clinicians with different areas of expertise working together in a planned approach with the patient in their own home as much as possible, iCAT can identify other needs – especially if they are socially isolated.

“That may mean helping them to arrange appointments with their GP, checking that their social needs are being met, and hospital care only if it’s necessary,” Debbie said.

The end goal is to ensure a patient's needs are being met in an environment where they’re most comfortable, while also maintaining our hospital capacity for more acute cases.”

One example of the outstanding work done by the iCAT team was their rapid response supporting people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wide Bay has among the highest number of COPD sufferers across Australia, with rates estimated at about 25% higher than the statewide average.

“The agility of our iCAT service meant we were able to contact 462 high-risk COPD patients in the Wide Bay in a two-week period which ensured their safety and wellness was supported throughout the COVID-19 pandemic,” iCAT Acting Operations Director Jacqueline Haskew said.

“Our iCAT team were overwhelmed by the grateful patient feedback they received during the phone calls.

“In addition to this work, our team also proactively supported 361 of our most chronic and complex patients in the Wide Bay region with Integrated Care management plans to support hospital avoidance.”

That support work has led to a decrease in COPD presentations to WBHHS emergency departments, when typically presentations would increase in winter.

Hervey Bay woman Margaret Anderson is among the patients to benefit from iCAT, now being managed by the team locally instead of travelling to Maryborough for her weekly treatment.

“I was diagnosed with leukemia two years ago and the only thing that keeps me alive is platelet transfusion, which I had to go every week to Maryborough Hospital to have – I found it too much,” Mrs Anderson said.

“I really did find travel difficult as I don’t have much energy as it is, and it took the complete day away from me. That flowed over to the next day because I was tired from how the trip drained energy from me.

“Now it’s just an hour-and-a-half appointment (at the iCAT clinic in Hervey Bay), which is just marvellous and I’m very grateful. The care I get is outstanding, it’s wonderful treatment with caring and professional staff – I’m lucky to have them caring for me.”

WBHHS iCAT is developing alternative pathways and working in partnership with local GPs, aged care facilities, Queensland Ambulance Service and other health stakeholders to deliver patient-centred care.

Bite-sized health consumer engagement sessions

While Health Consumers Queensland (HCQ) might not be visiting our sites between now and the end of the year, they will be delivering snack packs to interested staff.

The Consumer Engagement Snack Pack is an online training tool that runs from 12pm to 12:30pm on Thursdays.

HCQ developed the online consumer engagement training to enable busy health staff to have better accessibility through regular short sessions.

These bite-sized training sessions start on July 23rd and are delivered right to your desk if you log in via www.hcq.org.au/snackpack.
ONE of WBHHS’s longest-serving clinical directors was given a warm thank you celebration from colleagues across the Fraser Coast recently, as he stepped down from his leadership role.

Hervey Bay Hospital Clinical Director of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Dr Dirk Ludwig has decided to take a step back to part-time clinical work, after an impressive 28 years with WBHHS, 21 of which have been as director.

It’s estimated about 20,000 babies have been born on the Fraser Coast under his leadership.

Numbers at the celebration had to be capped to comply with current social gathering restrictions, but there were plenty of people keen to make speeches about their memories of and gratitude for working alongside the senior doctor.

These included Executive Director of Allied Health Stephen Bell, Acting General Manager of Family and Community Ben Ross-Edwards, Midwifery Unit Manager Pamela Harsant and Clinical Director of Anaesthetics Dr Peter Harvey.

Stephen said Dr Ludwig was leaving an impressive legacy, including a strong record in training, education and clinical governance – and, most importantly, thousands of happy and grateful families.

Dr Harvey said he had always felt obstetrics was one of the most rewarding, but also one of the most challenging, areas of medicine.

“You’ve actually got two patients to look after – the mother and the baby,” he said.

Dirk has always been very professional, has always been a supportive colleague, and has always had the interests of patients and staff at heart.”

Dr Harvey joked that Dr Ludwig had also done a great job of succession planning, with one of his three daughters also choosing to become a doctor, and the other two in health-related fields.

Dr Sabaratnam Ganeshananthan was welcomed last week as the new Clinical Director Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

COLLEAGUES have paid tribute to Hervey Bay Hospital Clinical Director of General Surgery Dr Ahmad Hooshyari, who has decided to step down in favour of becoming part-time staff specialist.

Dr Hooshyari has led the department for the past 11 years.

“During his time at the helm, there have been many changes, including a lot of growth and improvement, and Dr Hooshyari has led and adapted throughout all of them,” General Manager of Surgery Tracey Pattie said.

“He’s always been committed to his patients and his team, ensuring a high-quality experience for everyone.

“While he’s decided to step back from his leadership position, we’re fortunate to be able to retain him as part of the surgery team.”

Dr Ahmad Hooshyari is farewelled after 11 years as clinical director by (from left) Deb Scott, Tracey Pattie, Emilia Dauway, Colin Lye, Suresh Munugani and Siva Suntharalingam.

Dr Emilia Dauway, who joined Hervey Bay Hospital recently, has now taken on the role of Clinical Director.
Arthur Marshall, 103

CELEBRATING his 103rd birthday, Biggenden MPHS resident Arthur Marshall had his wife, family and friends join him on his birthday on June 29.

Arthur told the Central and North Burnett Times that his recipe for a long life was all the things you shouldn’t have – such as fat and salt.

Joining him for his birthday was wife Letty, who still lives across the road from the MPHS in their family home on Alice Street.

She continues to visit him each day at the MPHS and shares with her husband a lifelong passion for gardening.

Arthur was born in Deepwater, near Tenterfield in New South Wales, and came to Biggenden in 1986.

According to friends and family, Arthur has always enjoyed rural life and his big love was horses, dogs and cattle.

Renowned for breaking in and handling horses, Arthur was the “original horse whisperer”, according to friend Ian Newport.

Known as a general handyman, Arthur was also well skilled in farming, construction, roadworks and bridgeworks.

Arthur kept his driver’s licence up until his was 100, when he finally handed it in.

Alby Cross, 104

SURROUNDED by family, fellow residents and staff, Alby Cross celebrated his 104th birthday on June 21 at Biggenden Multipurpose Health Service.

Alby is a long-term local resident, having moved to the Biggenden area in 1937 to work in the local timber industry.

Born in 1916 in Kingaroy, Alby was the eldest of George and Margaret’s nine children.

Following his childhood, Alby started work in the timber industry in the Bunya Mountains in 1932 before heading to Biggenden.

Alby met Jean McLachlan, whom he married in 1946. Shortly afterwards they bought their first land at Woowoonga and later expanded that land by buying neighbouring properties.

The couple had seven children, which led to 14 grandchildren and now 24 great-grandchildren.

In the 1950s Alby would spend the day working timber and loading logs onto railway wagons, while dairying morning and night back at the farm with his wife and children.

Alby recalls how frightening the 1954 floods were in the Biggenden area when their family, including three toddlers and his pregnant wife, were isolated on the property.

He said the water ended up lapping the top steps of their home, which saw them shift the house across the creek and up a hill – but they never had a flood that big again.

Jean passed away in 1994.

Alby remained active even in years when many would be relaxing in retirement, staying on the farm and riding horses until he was 98 years old.
Kalkie State School's shining support

KALKIE STATE School students have got behind WBHHS's Bundaberg-based staff with a beautiful display of support.

The students have been expressing their thanks to essential healthcare workers through making their own cards.

The cards, which include thoughtful written messages and beautiful artwork, have been mailed to Bundaberg Hospital and distributed to various staff.

While the past few months have presented many challenges, one positive from the COVID-19 pandemic is how our communities have expressed their support for our work.

Our thanks go out to Kalkie State School staff and students, plus everyone else who has offered their support and encouragement in recent months.

New option for booking interpreter services

From this week, WBHHS staff can choose to use NextGen for scheduling Interpreter Services where the booking is more than 24 hours in the future.

The new service is provided by our existing interpreter service provider, OnCall.

Bookings can be made via NextGen for users with an existing login.

If you require an interpreter and do not have a NextGen login, staff can still schedule service over the telephone using the following details:

- Provider: OnCall
- Phone: 3115 6999
- Provide the patient’s name, UR number, language and location.
- Cost Centre: 3200477.

If you would like to create an account for scheduling providers, send an email to clientservices@oncallinterpreters.com with your name, phone, email and the hospital or health services where you will be making bookings.

Further information and a quick reference guide can be found on QHEPS or qheps.health.qld.gov.au/scwbhsd/html/serv/interpreter

Lifeflight fundraiser

For the month of July, RACQ LifeFlight Rescue is challenging the Queensland community to run, walk or ride a combined 20,000km while raising funds for the much-needed helicopter rescue service.

The distance goal of the “Run to Rescue” challenge is designed to match the distance a single chopper would typically fly in a month.

Each day, RACQ LifeFlight Rescue crews treat seriously ill and critically injured patients, with 10 helicopters are based in five locations around Queensland, including Bundaberg. Last year alone, the fleet of community helicopters completed more than 2,000 critical missions.

Every dollar raised through Run to Rescue will help cover essential costs including medical equipment, safety equipment, helicopter fuel and maintenance.

By taking part in Run to Rescue, you are helping to keep our choppers in the sky and saving lives.

To get involved or to donate, head to www.runtorescue.org.au
Your role: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advanced Health Worker

How long have you been with WBHHS?
Since 2012

How do you describe what you do?
I help bridge a gap while trying to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their own health journey by advocating in a culturally safe manner. I provide a culturally safe social, emotional and spiritual support, and help patients navigate through what can sometimes be a complex health system. I also help the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health team build capacity for our staff and the community.

What’s best about your job?
I get a lot of satisfaction from helping someone through their own health journey and having a positive outcome. There’s also a lot of empathy shared throughout our mental health service, from the bigger hospitals to the rural towns, and a lot of respect shown among work colleagues.

What was your path into health care?
My health journey started with an NGO in my home town of Gayndah in the North Burnett.

I was lucky enough to secure a position with WBHHS after applying in 2012 with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Team. I now really enjoy my role in Mental Health.

What does being part of a team mean to you?
It means we all have roles to play. If we all play our part, we will achieve anything we set out to do. It means having great mates with shared values, and working toward common goals for the best outcomes for our consumers.

When you’re not at work, you are...
Spending time with family and friends. Watching children play their chosen sports of basketball and rugby league, going for a casual spin in the classic Holden, listening to music or going home to visit Dad, or camping and fishing.

What do you enjoy about living in Wide Bay?
I like that we’re pretty central, with all good things on our doorstep. We can go to the beach, go bush camping and a trip to the big smoke is just down the road. It’s a great place to raise a family.

Tell us something we might not know about you.
I’ve enjoyed being a foster parent for more than 10 years.

What song are you listening to most right now?
Flame Trees – Cold Chisel.

Patient compliments

Maryborough Hospital Rehabilitation Unit
Stephanie, Sherry, Bronwyn and Lauren were absolutely wonderful – so professional, caring and able to push me in a very positive way that made me want to get better. Without their positivity I don’t believe I could have achieved what I have in such a short time. I find it hard to thank them enough. All the nurses without exception were wonderful. I must say a special thank you to Matthew, Donna, Carol, Trish and Nibby. Tracey is exceptional – I felt like a friend as well as a patient. Thank you.

Maryborough Hospital Ward 2
To all the wonderful staff on Ward 2, thank you so much for your care and compassion to our late wife, mother and gran. Thank you for the support you gave us during this extremely difficult time in our lives. We really appreciate all you did.

Jokes of the day

Given the end of financial year has just passed, we figured our friends in finance and accounting would be very busy and probably need a laugh. So this week we bring you some finance-flavoured jokes (yes, they do exist).

The most successful investor in history was Noah. He floated stock, while everything around him went into liquidation.

How do you tell an accountant to be quiet? You ask them to use their invoice.

What’s On

**JULY**

1–31  Dry July
12–18  National Diabetes Week
16     NAIDOC WBHHS online ceremony
20     WBHHS online Staff Forum

**JULY 26–AUGUST 2**

DonateLife Week