

Year in review



Series puts health service in spotlight

Gold Coast Health featured in a reality television series which showcased the world class care delivered by staff.

Gold Coast Medical aired on Channel 7 and featured the expertise of surgeons, paediatric staff specialists, the trauma team, midwives and more.

It captured many examples of the diverse health service at its best and staff clearly demonstrated the Gold Coast Health values of compassion, integrity, respect and excellence.

International interest in the Gold Coast has been generated, as the documentary series has been showcased to audiences in the United Kingdom and Europe.

Gold Coast Health leads nation's first Neurodevelopment Exposure Disorder service

Gold Coast Health is home to Australia's leading centre for the diagnosis and intervention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder with the launch of a Neurodevelopment Exposure Disorder (NED) Service in September 2016.

Disorders such as brain abnormalities, low birth weight, distinctive facial features, heart defects, behavioural problems and intellectual disabilities can occur in childhood when the foetus is exposed to drugs and alcohol.

The NED Service has been granted \$1 million in joint funding from Queensland Health and Gold Coast Health.

Gold Coast Health Director of Community Child Health Dr Doug Shelton is leading the diagnostic service which, when fully operational, will employ specialists including a psychologist, speech pathologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, paediatrician specialist and nurses.

Outreach team marks a decade

The Homeless Health Outreach Team (HHOT) has marked 10 years of helping rebuild the lives of 2000 people experiencing mental health issues and other difficulties that lead to them living on the streets.

The multi-disciplinary team has grown to 20 and includes psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, social workers as well as drug and alcohol experts.

The HHOT collaborates with about 60 organisations to build trust with people on the street who would not normally associate with health services.

GCUH has liaison officers working in its Emergency Department to help people access housing, clothing and toiletries.



Gold Coast Health team delivers A+ medical care

At the end of each academic year, Australian teenagers flock to the Gold Coast to celebrate the end of high school. Gold Coast Health medical, nursing and mental health staff provided care to 319 schoolies at the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) Ambulance Treatment Centre between Saturday 19 November and Friday 25 November 2016.

As a hospital avoidance strategy, Gold Coast Health works in partnership with QAS to provide an outreach emergency service based on the beachfront at Surfers Paradise. The 'schoolies tent', as it is commonly known, has treated many thousands of patients since its inception more than 15 years ago.

This has minimised the impact on both the GCUH and Robina Emergency Departments. Considerable effort over many years has meant that the 'schoolies tent' has refined its operations to minimise the risk to a potentially vulnerable population of school leavers and provide quick access to medical care when required.

The Queensland Government Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services assumed overall leadership and response coordination. The support of the City of Gold Coast and cross agency collaboration including QAS, Queensland Police Service, State Emergency Services and Red Frogs Australia ensured the success and safety of Schoolies 2016.

Innovation improves service delivery

GCUH took part in a digital trial which significantly reduced paperwork for new parents by using hospital data to enrol their newborns into Medicare.

Between April and August 2016, 786 babies participated in the pilot program between the Federal Government and the Department of Health.

With the mother's consent, the trial uses hospital admission and birth records to enrol newborns in Medicare, the Medicare Safety Net, and to issue updated Medicare cards. It also adds them to the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register.

When surveyed, 97 per cent of participants indicated that the new system was convenient.



GCUH leads multi-centre trauma clinical trial

GCUH is the lead site for a Queensland clinical trial aiming to improve outcomes for severely injured trauma patients with critical bleeding.

To date, 83 patients have participated in the Fibrinogen Early In Severe Trauma study (FEISTY) trial launched in December. The trial has been carried out across GCUH and three other major trauma centres in Queensland: Princess Alexandra Hospital, Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and Townsville Hospital. The collaborative clinical trial involved the multidisciplinary collaboration of multiple departments including ED, Trauma, Anaesthesia and ICU, as well as Queensland Ambulance Service and the Blood Bank.

Intensive Care Specialist Dr James Winearls (pictured above) is the Chief Investigator behind the Gold Coast investigations into the use of a concentrated blood clotting product early in the treatment of severely bleeding trauma patients. The data gathered in this study will pave the way for larger multi-site and multi-national trials.



Magnet for health industry interns

Gold Coast Health's fast growing reputation as a major tertiary hospital with some of the largest clinical training and research facilities in Queensland is proving to be a drawcard for medical and nursing graduates.

A total of 91 new graduate doctors started their internship with the health service in 2016–17 in addition to 149 graduate Registered Nurses.

The health service has extended medical orientation from one week to a fortnight as the interns familiarise themselves with the hospitals, services, clinical practice and procedures.

GCUH is one of the few large tertiary hospitals which offers medical interns rotations in most specialties including paediatrics and surgical sub-specialities.

In the past five years the health service has employed more than 700 graduate nurses and invested in resources such as simulation technologies to enhance the development of graduate nurses' confidence in their clinical practices.



Pathology project leads to patient benefit

A Gold Coast Health initiative to reduce unnecessary pathology testing for patients attracted national interest when it was presented at the Choosing Wisely Australia National Meeting.

Since the health service introduced its Choosing Wisely Pathology pilot project 15 months ago, there has been a two per cent drop in the number of tests ordered despite a 10 per cent increase in patient activity.

Gold Coast Health was ordering an average of 96,000 public pathology tests a month, which has now been reduced to an average of 93,500 while caring for a growing number of patients.

The reduction in ordering unnecessary tests has been achieved through medical, nursing, and pathology representatives working together and has resulted in an effective cost saving of \$1.48m for the financial year. In addition to the financial savings, there are a range of quality and safety performance improvements associated with the project, including improving the patient experience, saving medical and nursing time, saving laboratory time and equipment, reducing the number of retests and minimising variation in care.

Pictured above: Haematologist Dr Jeremy Wellwood and project manager Therese Kelly are part of the Choosing Wisely project improving pathology ordering practices.

Surgeons share knowledge on global scale

Thirty-five international surgeons visited GCUH for a two-day training course on modern orthopaedic surgical techniques. The initiative, a collaboration between Gold Coast Health's Orthopaedic Department and Griffith University's School of Anatomy, demonstrates Gold Coast Health's growing capacity as a research and training institution.

One day was spent working on cadavers at Griffith University to learn modern surgical techniques while the other was spent analysing problem cases with top Gold Coast Health clinician Professor Randy Bindra (pictured below).



Diversity in the workforce

Gold Coast Health embraces the diversity of its people and is committed to building a workforce that equally reflects the diversity of the community it serves.

A Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2016–2019) was launched in 2016 and the health service has already made progress, partnering with EPIC Assist to provide roles for a number of visually impaired candidates and work placements for others across various work areas such as digital transformation, human resources and finance.

In January Dinesh Palipana (pictured above) became the first quadriplegic medical intern in Queensland.

A strategic partnership with TAFE Queensland Gold Coast has created subsidised learning and development opportunities for staff with more than \$89,000 worth of subsidies at the Certificate IV and Diploma level provided in the 2016–17 financial year.

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse program continues to offer interpreter services to our patients and all staff complete cultural diversity training.



Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Navigators drive excellence in patient care

In 2016 Gold Coast Health Nurse Practitioners joined their peers to celebrate the role's 10th anniversary as part of the Queensland nursing workforce.

This year Gold Coast Health is recruiting a further 10 Nurse Practitioners and 15 Nurse Navigators as part of the Queensland Health Nurse Navigator initiative.

These new roles will complement the Nurse Practitioner, nurse and midwife navigator positions already in place and will work with their clinical teams to provide expert nursing care, co-ordination and support for those patients who have complex health conditions.



Vaccination rates on the rise

The Gold Coast community is increasing the rate of childhood vaccination following cohesive marketing campaigns and innovative immunisation program delivery mechanisms implemented by the Public Health Unit. Social media stories and educational videos to promote immunisation have reached over a million people.

The Communicable Disease Control and Immunisation teams have worked with the Gold Coast Primary Health Network to conduct outreach vaccination clinics at Indigenous NAIDOC and Gold Coast homeless events and at expos across the city.

Their efforts led to a five per cent increase in childhood vaccination rates to 94 per cent and an increase of 10 per cent in the school vaccination coverage. This was achieved by taking a consultative approach to delivering the school and community vaccination clinics and increasing opportunities for parental feedback.

