

# Our services

**Gold Coast Health, similar to health organisations globally, is facing significant challenges in delivering high quality, low cost healthcare with high levels of patient satisfaction.**

As identified in *My health, Queensland's future: Advancing health 2026*, our population is aging and there is a growing number of Queenslanders living with chronic disease.

Solutions such as best-practice clinical interventions, new technologies, digital transformation and a resilient, engaged workforce will help us to navigate a healthcare which is changing rapidly.

The health service is divided into four main clinical directorates containing a range of service areas:

- Cancer, Access and Support Services
- Diagnostic, Emergency and Medical Services
- Mental Health and Specialist Services
- Specialty and Procedural Services.

## **Cancer, Access and Support Services (CASS)**

Demand, Access and Management  
Cancer, Blood and Palliative Care  
Public Health  
Infectious Diseases and Immunology  
Pharmacy  
Nutrition and Food Services  
Social Work and Support  
Speech Pathology

## **Diagnostic, Emergency and Medical Services (DEMS)**

Emergency and Assessment  
Transitional Care Services  
Diagnostic Services  
General Medicine, Aged Care, Vascular, Endocrine  
Cardiac, Thoracic, Renal, Respiratory  
Neurology Services and Rehabilitation

## **Specialty and Procedural Services (SaPS)**

Perioperative and Critical Care  
Head, Neck, Oral and Neurosurgical  
Surgical and Musculoskeletal  
Women's, Newborn and Children's

## **Mental Health and Specialist Services (MHSS)**

Specialist Programs and Alcohol and Other Drugs  
Adult and Older Person Mental Health  
Child and Youth Mental Health  
Community Mental Health  
Quality, Safety and Corporate Governance  
Business Support Unit

**“Ji’s needs are complicated and constantly shifting, so not having to wait in limbo to see a specialist is a huge relief for us as his carers and for Ji. We have had regular contact with the health system for a long time now and in the past 12 months I have really noticed a huge improvement in access to specialist care for Ji. Overall the support we receive leaves us feeling very confident about managing his needs.”**

– Georgia Howell, mother of seven-year-old Ji who was diagnosed with microcephaly at four months old. His family knows all too well the importance of timely access to specialist outpatient services at Gold Coast Health.

## Record reduction in long waits

A program to transform specialist outpatient (SOPD) services is producing outstanding results for the health service and its patients.

The two-year initiative (SOPD Long Waits) was designed to reduce long waits, enhance value, and create sustainable services for the future through a system-wide approach and engaged clinicians.

In the ear, nose and throat specialty, doctors from the General Practitioner Liaison Unit (GPLU) reviewed 802 long wait Category Three patients – 69 per cent were identified as complete referrals with 31 per cent as incomplete referrals.

Of the 802 reviewed patients, 19 per cent were able to be removed from the waitlist and of the remaining 81 per cent, three per cent were re-categorised.

A similar approach to 201 orthopaedic Category Three patients led to 18 per cent being able to be removed from the waitlist. Of the remaining 82 percent, 8.6 per cent were re-categorised.

Of the 201 patients, 83 per cent were identified as complete referrals with 17 percent having incomplete referrals.

Across all of specialist outpatient services, the number of patients waiting more than two years for their initial outpatient appointment fell from 342 at 30 June, 2016, to one at 30 June, 2017.

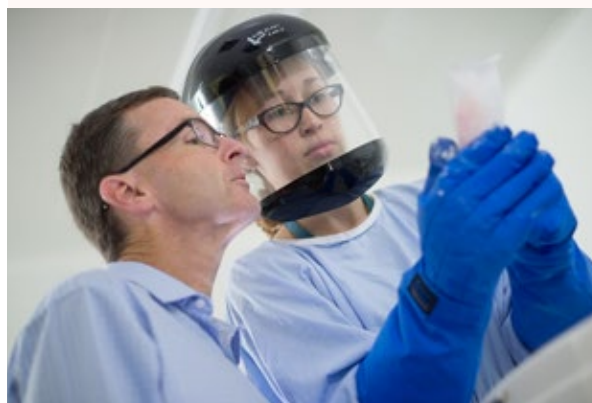
The SOPD Long Wait program was delivered by the Demand Access and Management service area, with support from the Strategic Program Management Office, and used waitlist management strategies which include after hours and Saturday clinics; extra clinicians across a number of specialities; a first contact pathway such as allied health and nurse-led models of care; increasing clinician skills-mix such as GPs with special interest; administrative processes; and external pathways for end-to-end patient journey providing access to care sooner.

The project was carried out with additional funding from Queensland Health. Meanwhile, Gold Coast Health recorded its lowest number of ultra-long waits in more than four years, with only one patient in this category as at 30 June 2017.

### The year ahead:

In 2017–18, we will continue to strive to ensure that no patient is waiting longer than clinically recommended. We will do this by:

- ensuring effective consultation and engagement within the health service and with primary care regarding new initiatives and service delivery
- establish an audiology position as part of the ENT Allied Health Primary Contact Service.



## Successful stem cell transplant program

GCUH provides accessible stem cell transplant services for the local community and northern New South Wales region through its nationally accredited haemopoietic stem cell (HSC) transplant program.

In 2015 the hospital became the first Level Six haematology centre in the country to gain national accreditation under established national guidelines (National Pathology Accreditation Advisory Council, 1998).

The onsite service is accredited to collect, process, store and reinfuse autologous haemopoietic stem cells in the setting of high-dose conditioning chemotherapy.

The HSC program offers autologous stem cell transplant as a treatment modality for a variety of malignant haemato-oncological diseases.

A rigorous quality management system is supported by the provision of expert clinical care in both inpatient and ambulatory settings.

Peripheral blood stem cell collections are performed by specialist nursing staff within the collection facility and the product is cryopreserved and stored on site at -180°C within the HSC Laboratory operated by Pathology Queensland.

Since its establishment the HSC Program has successfully performed:

- 114 peripheral blood stem collections with cryopreservation
- 54 stem cell reinfusions.

Activity is forecast to remain steady with 50–80 collections per annum coupled with 20–30 reinfusions for a combined local and interstate patient population.

## Growth in emergency care

Statistics show GCUH has the busiest Emergency Department (ED) in the state and the second busiest ED in Australia.

In this financial year there were 103,709 presentations to the ED at GCUH and 60,417 presentations to ED at Robina Hospital.

Overall Gold Coast Health received a record 164,126 presentations.

The 1.56 per cent increase in emergency patients, which equates to an average of 53 patients a week, at GCUH is coupled with more trauma patients and more complex injuries, creating some challenges for clinicians and nursing teams to deliver timely care for patients and quality health outcomes.

Gold Coast Health recorded a National Emergency Access Target (NEAT) of 78 per cent, meaning almost four out of five people had completed their total care in ED within four hours of arrival.

The Queensland NEAT target is 80 per cent and was established in 2016 after a clinician-led peer reviewed research by the Queensland Clinical Senate and supported by the Clinical Excellence Division, Queensland Health.

Gold Coast Health is dealing with these challenges in a number of ways.

The GCUH Paediatric ED has expanded its operating hours and is now available 24 hours a day, seven days a week offering round-the-clock specialised care to the community's young population.

During 2016–17 it received 24,920 children with a NEAT of 84 per cent and the Robina Paediatric ED provided care for 11,194 children, with a NEAT of 89 per cent.

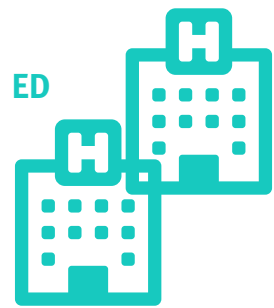
In addition, a 'waiting room nurse' has been introduced to the GCUH ED to help with patient care and safety for ambulatory patients within the waiting area.

Bed numbers in the Clinical Decision Unit have increased from eight to 12 and more growth is planned in the coming year.



**103,709**  
total arrivals at GCUH ED

**60,417**  
total arrivals at  
Robina Hospital ED



**1.56%**  
increase in  
emergency  
patients

**4/5** people had completed total  
care within four hours



**36,114** children  
were provided care in our  
Paediatric EDs



**4** new beds in the  
Clinical Decision Unit

## 5000<sup>th</sup> birth just in time for Christmas

Gold Coast University Hospital surpassed 5000 births in a calendar year for the first time in 2016.

The milestone birth arrived on 24 December at 6.23pm, with mother and child discharged in the early hours of Christmas morning to enjoy Christmas at home.

Demand for the health service’s full range of antenatal, birth, postnatal and neonatal care for women and their families has been growing on the Gold Coast.

There has been a significant increase in women choosing to give birth at Gold Coast University Hospital due to its modern and attractive birthing suites, skilled staff and exceptional level of care.

Gold Coast Health provides a comprehensive and supportive birthing service to Gold Coast families, which includes fetal medicine services, a Newborn Care Unit, a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for specialist care post-delivery and services to support children right through their development.

In the 2016–17 financial year, a total of 5129 babies were born at GCUH.

**Table 2: Births at GCUH**

Reporting year	Babies born
2011/12	3551
2012/13	3787
2013/14	4375
2014/15	4744
2015/16	4943
2016/17	5129

**“Overall, I found the experience to be extremely calm and filled with love.”**

– Caesarean patient Amanda McCullough after their Valentine’s Day baby’s delivery at Gold Coast University Hospital.

## Midwives mark first anniversary

Community-based Gold Coast Health midwifery service, Your Midwives Brygon Creek, has marked one year of serving Upper Coomera families.

Your Midwives Brygon Creek is a team of five midwives, including a lactation consultant, who deliver comprehensive antenatal and postnatal care through weekday clinics and home visits seven days a week.

Since 1 July 2016, Your Midwives Brygon Creek completed 1500 antenatal appointments and 3950 home visits to new mums and babies.

Your Midwives Brygon Creek is located at Level 1, 1 Brygon Creek Drive, Upper Coomera.

For more information visit [www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/maternity](http://www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au/our-services/maternity).



From left, Sam Jackson with baby Summer, Alison Lind and Harper, midwife Louise Mayes, Cassandra Frith with baby Andre and Katherine Pattie with Jake.



## Supporting new mothers in need

Gold Coast Health successfully commissioned and launched a new model of service with the state's first specialist mother and infant inpatient unit as well as a community component of the mother and infant services.

The \$3.5 million Lavender Unit, situated within an acute mental health ward, enables mothers diagnosed with acute postnatal disorders to receive treatment without the added anxiety of being separated from their babies.

Led by a perinatal psychiatrist, the multidisciplinary team includes experienced doctors, nurses, social workers, occupational therapists and other allied health workers.

Recurrent funding of \$4.6 million from 2017-18 will ensure the Lavender Unit truly becomes a state-wide service, supporting mothers and babies from across Queensland.

**“It can be a frightening and isolating experience for mothers trying to deal with their symptoms, especially when needing to care for a new baby at the same time. As someone who’s had the experience of a post-natal disorder, I hope to have a positive impact on the mums coming through the Lavender Unit and give them hope for a brighter tomorrow.”**

*Michelle Edwards was treated for severe post-natal psychosis following the birth of her first child 24 years ago and is now using that experience as a carer consultant with Gold Coast Health.*

## Breaking down barriers in mental health

Gold Coast Health has launched a series of videos which aim to reduce the stigma related to mental illness in the elderly population.

Three consumers and a carer aged 65 and over share powerful stories about the challenges of living with a mental illness and their journeys to recovery in the three-minute videos produced by the health service's Older Person Mental Health Community team.

The videos aim to educate others and empower people to ask for help.

The videos feature 81-year-old Joy who has lived with depression since she was 46; Joy's husband Nev who describes his experience of caring for Joy; Melvin who was diagnosed with Bipolar Affective Disorder 20 years ago; and Clarice, 86, who sought professional help six years ago.

The population of people aged 65 years and older living on the Gold Coast is estimated at 98,000.

Older Persons Mental Health Community provides specialised, community-based multidisciplinary services, including mental health assessment and treatment, for adults over the age of 65 years, who have a severe and complex mental health illness or disorder, which is complicated by problems or illnesses related to aging.



Healthcare consumer Clarice with Jessie Blacker, Occupational Therapist and Diana Grice, Director of Nursing, Mental Health and Specialist Services.



The videos can be viewed on Gold Coast Health's YouTube channel:  
[www.youtube.com/user/GoldCoastHealth](http://www.youtube.com/user/GoldCoastHealth)

## Engaging consumers a driver of success

Mental Health and Specialist Services (MHSS) continues its commitment to providing safe, sustainable, efficient, quality and responsive services to the Gold Coast community.

The search for effective and lasting solutions has seen an enhanced consultative approach in prioritising key initiatives such as the Breaking the ICE forums, advancing the Zero Suicide Framework with the implementation of a prevention pathway, the introduction of therapy dogs in inpatient units and growth in interpreter services.

*The Mental Health Act 2016* came into effect in March 2017 and Gold Coast Health has appointed Independent Patient Rights Advisor roles which aim to improve patient outcomes and support Gold Coast Health to achieve human rights commitments.

Engaging consumers is a vital driver of success in the delivery of quality mental health services. Gold Coast Health continues its strong record of engagement through the annual ARTBEAT music and art festival (pictured above right), when consumers take to the stage at GCUH to perform and showcase almost 70 artworks created by consumers in the hospital foyer.

The MHSS also implemented 'Safewards' – a model focused on working with consumers to reduce conflict and containment to make the inpatient units a more therapeutic and peaceful place.

A reduction in the rate of seclusion per 1000 patient days is a testament to the success of this model. We are also working to re-align our models of care to ensure greater access and access to appropriate and targeted specialist intervention services aged 0–25 years to intervene early and ensure adequate treatment provision and continuity of care across this age spectrum.



Independent Patient Rights Advisors Andrea Stratis Kelly, Craig Sutton and Amanda Jackson support mental health services and patients at Gold Coast Health.



---

 **20,538** phone calls received by the 1300 MH CALL line

---

 **3300** inpatient admissions  
**3623** inpatient discharges

---

 **1295**  
Gold Coast students from years 8 to 12 were provided awareness training and education via the ICE initiative

---

 **7583**  
The number of occasions interpreters provided services  
In addition, translated information is available in eight languages including Arabic, Japanese and Bosnian.

---

### The year ahead:

---

In 2017–18, we will continue to support people who have a mental illness. We will do this by:

- continuing the Safewards program to deliver effective and caring interactions
  - developing an Electro Convulsive Therapy educational video for consumers and carers
  - re-aligning models of care to ensure greater access to appropriate specialist intervention services for those aged 0–25
  - remodelling community follow-up services to improve post-discharge follow-up rates.
-

## Health care through a cultural lens

Gold Coast Health is dedicated to achieving the commitments of the Queensland Government to Closing the Gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the non-Indigenous population by 2033.

Gold Coast Health is proud to support the Karulbo Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnership which is integral in building engagement by bringing community members together to discuss health challenges and solutions.

The health service is achieving this by building a culturally responsive workforce and implementing best practice and outcome-focused systems that apply a cultural lens.

This includes the development of a specific Gold Coast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander e-learning component of the existing Cultural Practice Program, which 222 staff have completed since its inception in March 2017.

We continue to make significant positive strides in patient care, whilst recognising that there is still a great deal of concerted and collaborative effort required to address health inequality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members on the Gold Coast.

Existing initiatives include culturally specific programs such as the Heart Health screening program, Mungulli chronic disease specialist clinics, outreach dietetic and diabetes education clinics in partnership with Kalwun Health Service and development of the Bush Tucker Calendar and cooking sessions to increase the knowledge of local traditional foods and increase health and wellbeing.

Growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce is a fundamental strategy to Closing the Gap. Gold Coast Health has a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service which provides cultural support and guidance through health worker and clinical roles.

The health service recently established a Nurse Navigator role to focus on chronic disease complex care specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

It also employed its first Aboriginal Midwife as part of the Midwifery Group Practice program, providing culturally appropriate continuity of care for pregnant women and their families.



These positions, together with culturally safe spaces such as a birthing suite wrapped in Aboriginal artwork (pictured above), make a positive impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members' experience of Gold Coast Health.

Because of this, the health services expects to see marked improvements in coming years in key performance indicators, particularly reducing low birth weight, discharge against medical advice (DAMA) and antenatal visits.

The DAMA percentage rate is slightly up compared to the previous years' data with work continuing and set to intensify to identify strategies to support patients during their hospital stay and reduce the rate of discharge against medical advice.

Potentially preventable hospitalisations (PPH) have declined with the percentage rate of 10.5 per cent in 2015–16 down to 9.8 per cent in 2016–17 (as at 31 March 2017).

## Flagship initiative

Gold Coast Integrated Care (GCIC) is a flagship initiative which aims to improve care for patients with chronic disease and complex care needs through collaboration between general practitioners, hospital and health services and other mechanisms.

GCIC is managing one in six Gold Coast residents, with 92,000 active patients from 15 general practices, who have partnered with the Integrated Care team for the four-year pilot.

It has a chronic disease register of more than 85,000 patients identified as having conditions such as diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, chronic kidney disease, ischaemic heart disease and more.

An electronic Shared Care Record is established for each patient and accessible to them as well as their nominated care providers, such as GPs, and family or carers.

A resource called Integrated Care Connect provides general practitioners with an automated daily update on disease registers and patient management, daily admissions and discharges, outpatient waiting lists as well as surgical waiting and booked lists.

The program, which commenced in 2014, is delivered in partnership with the Queensland Department of Health, Gold Coast Health and the Gold Coast Primary Health Network.



### The year ahead:

In 2017–18 we will:

- complete the GCIC pilot program
- roll out GCIC to include a broader range of conditions that will also include wellness, for example integrated maternity services
- consider application to other Queensland health services.

## Growth in research activity

Research activity at Gold Coast Health has continued to grow during 2016–17. Staff were involved in 152 research projects which contributed \$2.55 million to revenue and generated 318 peer-reviewed publications. This research activity was further demonstrated in the development of 40 national and 22 international research partnerships.

A research governance structure has been established to provide strategic guidance and operational support for research across the health service and a range of training initiatives to increase staff awareness and engagement in research have been developed. These include:

- Stimulating Action in Research (STAR) program
- Evidence Based Practice workshops supported by the Centre of Research Evidence Based Practice, Bond University
- A Practicing Knowledge Translation Workshop delivered by the Knowledge Translation Program, St Michael's Hospital, Toronto, Canada.

Together with the introduction of an annual peer reviewed research grant scheme to build research capacity and the growth in staff undertaking higher degree research studies, these key activities continue to drive high quality research and set the research themes for the future Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct.



More information about our research activities can be found in the **Gold Coast Health Research Review**.

To view online visit:

[www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/gold-coast-health-research-annual-reports](http://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/gold-coast-health-research-annual-reports)