

April 2023

GP News

Medical Community Virtual Consults expanding

The Medical Community Virtual Consult (MCVC) service is a way that we can begin to address the fragmented aspects of healthcare. The service provides virtual multidisciplinary case conferences via HealthDirect's video call system, bridging the link between primary care and medical specialists. GPs can pre-book 20 minute appointments that are billable under MBS items for multidisciplinary case conferences. **The service offers access to internal medicine, paediatrics, dermatology, sexual health, geriatrics and nephrology.**

Our discussions with GPs have ranged from electrolyte disturbances that require medication tweaking to highly complex cases of multi-morbid patients with compromised decision-making capacity or unclear goals of care. By providing timely and accessible links to hospital-based physicians, the MCVC service can help to reunite fragmented aspects of healthcare and provide a more cohesive patient care plan.

This service is available to General Practitioners and Nurse Practitioners across Victoria. If you are seeking a virtual multidisciplinary case conference to improve patient outcomes and collaborate with hospital-based physicians, we invite you to book directly through our website at <https://mcvc.org.au>. We look forward to connecting with you and rebuilding healthcare together!



Respiratory Function Testing

The Northern Health Respiratory Function Laboratory continues to welcome referrals from our primary care partners. It has been a busy few years and we wanted to communicate some of our achievements and recent developments;

Increased capacity for primary care testing – We now have additional dedicated capacity to test primary care patients as a priority. We have short turnaround times for a range of respiratory function testing - including spirometry, gas transfer, lung volumes, skin prick testing and bronchial provocation. Referrals for lung function tests can be sent directly to the laboratory. If you require any referral pads please contact us directly

Accreditation – Northern Health Respiratory Function Laboratory becomes the only Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) accredited laboratory in the Northern suburbs and one of only ten laboratories in Victoria to have achieved full accreditation. This reflects the standard and quality of the services we are providing to our community. The accreditation covers all aspects of laboratory organisation, policies, procedures, equipment and quality control programs.

Education - Northern Health Respiratory Function Laboratory welcomes enquires from primary care partners regarding educational opportunities. Our staff can be engaged to assist with teaching around the performance and interpretation of spirometry and other respiratory function tests.

Asthma testing – After receiving feedback from our community partners we are working to offer more for people with asthma through the addition of a Methacholine challenge service. This “rule-out” test for asthma can be useful to help exclude asthma as a cause of symptoms such as cough or dyspnoea and assist in treatment de-escalation. In the interim, we will continue to offer the Mannitol challenge test which acts more reliably as a “rule-in” test for asthma. We welcome direct referrals for Spirometry (with bronchodilator response), Mannitol challenge testing, Fractional concentration of exhaled nitric oxide (FeNO) and Aeroallergen skin prick testing to assist in the evaluation of people with confirmed or suspected asthma and look forward to offering Methacholine challenge tests in the second half of 2023.

For any queries, referrals or information, the Respiratory lab can be contacted on:

Email: respiratorylab@nh.org.au

Phone/Fax: 8405 2444 / 8405 8230

Website: www.nh.org.au/service/lung-function-tests/



Intranasal Heparin Trial (INHERIT)

Northern Health is collaborating with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, University of Melbourne and Monash University to deliver a clinical trial testing intranasal heparin to treat early COVID-19 infection. It is a community-based, in-home trial that will test the efficacy of early treatment and post exposure prophylaxis.

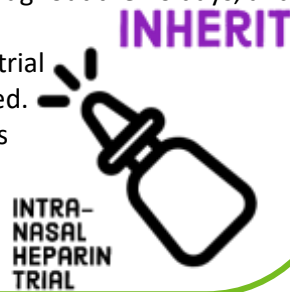
The primary outcome will be number of household family contacts who test positive on SARS-CoV-2 PCR assay by day 10 of the trial.

Participants will be randomised by household into either a heparin or placebo control group. Each participant will be required to spray the treatment into their nose 3 times a day for 10 days. Additionally, they will complete self-administered Rhinomed swabs and nurse-collected PCR swab tests throughout the 10 days, and also complete online clinical monitoring surveys.

We would greatly appreciate your support in sharing the trial with any of your patients who may be eligible or interested.

You may share the flyer on our website with your patients and provide our contact details to them if they have any questions INHERIT.Study@nh.org.au.

Website for more information [INHERIT Trial](#)



Disability Liaison

If you have a patient with a Disability and you are referring them to the Northern Hospital (Epping), please refer to us by emailing DisabilityLiaison@nh.org.au or calling 0486027974.

The Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) program can support your patient during their hospitalisation. This can include liaising with treating teams to advise Patient's specific needs, developing Care Plans to accurately summarise their needs, abilities and psychosocial situation. We can also liaise with their NDIS / Other supports as well as work with them to address and overcome barriers to service.

Please also note, there are now DLOs in every public hospital in Victoria

We have been approached by many families of persons with disabilities seeking home visiting GPs. Many of these patients live with ASD, anxieties and other issues which prevent them from leaving their homes or attending clinics. Their families are concerned that the patients are going without necessary care & to date, we have been unsuccessful in finding any GPs who can assist.

If this is a service you offer, please reach out DisabilityLiaison@nh.org.au or call 0486 02 79 74 or 0400 971 396

Priority Primary Care Centre (PPCC) now open in Craigieburn

Craigieburn PPCC is now open and providing care for people with Urgent but non-life-threatening conditions including:

- mild to moderate infections
- fever
- pain when urinating
- suspected minor fractures and sprains
- back and muscle pain
- minor cuts, burns, and insect or animal bites
- heartburn, vomiting, nausea
- headaches, migraines and brief fainting
- constipation, diarrhoea, abdominal pain
- allergies and rashes
- light bleeding in the first trimester of pregnancy
- mild to moderate asthma attacks, coughs and other respiratory symptoms

The Craigieburn PPCC is located at 70 Central Park Ave, Craigieburn and open 7 days a week from 7am-10pm. Appointments can be made via [Hotdoc](#) with walk-in appointments also available. The PPCC provides care for everyone, with or without a Medicare card at no cost.

The PPCC's in Epping and Craigieburn support the Northern Hospital and work closely with our Emergency Department to deliver the most appropriate care to patients in a timely manner.

You can find Posters for your waiting room here:

[EPPING](#)

[CRAIGIEBURN](#)



Upcoming events

General practice: evaluation and management of unilateral pleural effusion **Online- Tuesday 23rd May 2023 6.30pm-7.30pm**

This webinar offers an overview of recent advancements in diagnosis and management of Pleural effusions.

Pleural effusions – especially when unilateral and recurrent – can be harbingers of serious conditions, including primary or metastatic malignancies, infections such as tuberculosis, and other inflammatory illnesses. Timely diagnosis is essential to allow prompt, effective treatments.

Diagnosis of these effusions is based on gathering a thorough history, the evaluation of the pleural fluid and very often, a tissue biopsy. The procedures involved and the interpretation of results require training and significant expertise.

In this webinar speakers led by thoracic surgeon Dr Bibhusal Thapa will lead discussion on the diagnostic algorithm for unilateral pleural effusion, plus the modalities and characteristics of pleural biopsies. The pathways available at Northern Health for referral of patients with pleural effusions will also be discussed.

Dr Thapa will be joined by respiratory and sleep physicians Dr Sanjeevan Muruganandan and medical oncologist Dr Vishal Boolell.

[Register now](#)

Specialist Speed Consults: MCVC Networking Event **Stray Neighbour, Preston- Saturday 3rd June 2023 3.00pm-5.00pm**

The Specialist Team behind Northern Health's Medical Community Virtual Consult service (MCVC) are holding a Specialist Speed Consulting event: an opportunity to network and discuss complex cases with hospital based specialists. The event will consist of specialist-led case studies on commonly presented conditions with an opportunity for GPs to discuss their own cases with the specialists. Specialists in attendance include a Sexual Health Specialist, Rheumatologist, Nephrologist plus more!

[Register Now](#)

If you have any specific topics or areas you would like us to provide education on please [email](#).

Meet the team

Name: Dr Saam Tourani

Time at NH: 2 years

What is your role at NH? I am a Breast and Endocrine Surgeon

What is your background? I came to Australia right after graduating from the medical school in Iran. Following years of surgical HMO and registrar training in Melbourne, I received my FRACS in 2019. Subsequently I did two years of oncoplastic breast and endocrine surgery fellowship in some of the most reputable centres in Australia and the UK and joined Northern health as a consultant surgeon in 2021.

What do you enjoy about the work you do? I am passionate about surgery and committed to excellence in all my undertaking. It gives me a huge sense of satisfaction helping my patients through their cancer journey and see them cheerful at the other end.

What do you enjoy doing when you are not working? Hanging out with my wife and children, meeting up with friends, swimming, mountain biking, and playing Spanish guitar!

What's your favourite quote? "I never lose. I either win or I learn."

What's the best place you have travelled to?

Skiing in Japan has been my favourite holiday in the last 10 years!

Where do you see yourself in 10 years? I want to see Northern Health becoming an iconic centre of excellence for oncoplastic breast surgery internationally. We have a large patient cohort and a versatile, well-trained, and enthusiastic multidisciplinary team of specialists that can make that happen.



Contact us

Primary Care Liaison Unit

P: (03) 8405 8815 (option 5), Monday to Friday

E: nh-primarycareliaison@nh.org.au

W: <https://www.nh.org.au/health-professionals/primary-care-liaison/>