

July 2023

## GP News

### Specialist Speed Consulting Event Empowers GPs with Expertise and Insight

In a bid to enhance patient care and foster collaboration between hospital-based consultants and GPs, a highly anticipated Specialist Speed Consulting Event was held on Saturday, 3rd June, at Stray Neighbour in Preston. The event brought together medical professionals from metropolitan and regional Victoria, enabling GPs to tap into the expertise of specialists across various fields.

Dr David Langsford, Medical Lead of the MCV, opened the speed dating-style event, GPs were paired with consultants from disciplines such as paediatrics, dermatology, nephrology, rheumatology, and more. Each interaction lasted for a brief but intense interval, allowing GPs to present challenging cases and seek guidance from hospital-based specialists' wealth of knowledge.

The Northern Health MCV team were delighted with its success, emphasising the importance of continued collaboration between GPs and specialists to ensure holistic patient care. They expressed their commitment to organising similar events in the future, with an aim to strengthen the bonds between medical professionals and optimise healthcare outcomes.

The event was an in-person replication of the MCV service, an appointment-based service connecting GPs with specialists and gaining their expertise on challenging cases. For more information about the MCV, you can click [here](#).



### Musculoskeletal Wellness Program: Update for GPs

At Northern Health, we have started a new program to provide better care for our patients who are referred with **Osteoarthritis (OA) of the Knee**.

The **Musculoskeletal Wellness Program** (MSK-W program), developed in collaboration with NH Consumers, is directed toward the unique needs of NH patients.

#### Why we developed the program:

Referrals for orthopaedic review increase annually. Before we started the MSK-W program, there were approximately 1,400 patients with severe knee pain on the Orthopaedic Outpatient Clinic wait list waiting around 2-3 years to be seen. Studies show that patients with mild-moderate OA who receive 12 weeks of exercise-based intervention can have the same outcomes as the group of patients who have arthroplasty. What was lacking was this coordinated, cost-effective, and evidence-based program that allowed patients access to appropriate management while they waited for orthopaedic review.

#### Intervention:

Patients with knee OA referred for review are offered a 12-week exercise, education, and nutritional program via an online platform.

Also, a pilot program, in partnership with City of Whittlesea, was offered to a small cohort of patients completing the same program but via face to face classes. All patients complete regular web-platform PROM Surveys.

#### The Results:

A reduction from 1500 knee OA referrals waiting to be seen to under 700; significant improvements in pain, function, quality of life and high patient satisfaction. And earlier Orthopaedic review for those who need it!

**What's Next?** Over the next 12 months, we plan to develop specific Hip OA education and exercises; diversify for CALD populations, starting with Arabic and then Turkish Languages.

**Contact:** Please don't hesitate to contact the MSK-W Team on [msk@nh.org.au](mailto:msk@nh.org.au) – we'd love to hear from you!



## 5 Top Tips for GPs- Dermatology

### 1) Maximise use of local guidelines

NH has guidelines on its [website](#) for managing common conditions under its referral guideline, as does [HealthPathways](#).

### 2) Feel confident to do a biopsy.

We cannot see every dermatological condition, so we rely on GPs to be able to perform biopsies - please do them!

### 3) Avoid Prescription topical steroids on the face

This can exacerbate perioral dermatitis

### 4) No diagnosis, no oral steroids

Inappropriate use of oral steroids can actually flare some conditions, such as psoriasis.

### 5) If it looks like eczema, the basics work

The safest treatments are a basic moisturiser (e.g. QV) and a soap-free wash

By A/Prof Aaron Robinson from MCVC

**MCVC**

## Family Planning Clinic Expansion

We are pleased to announce that the **Family Planning Clinic** at Broadmeadows Hospital has expanded and is now **offering appointments on Thursdays and Fridays**.

**Services:** The clinic, staffed by a team of doctors and midwives, offers surgical termination of pregnancy up to 13 weeks and six days gestation, as well as early medication abortion up to 9 weeks (63 days) gestation. This comprehensive same-day service also offers a range of contraceptive options that can be administered on the day of the appointment, access to non-directive pregnancy counselling, social work and interpreting services. Patients attending the clinic are required to complete an ultrasound and blood group referred by the GP prior to attending. The service is publicly funded, with no out-of-pocket expenses to Medicare eligible patients. Payment plans can be arranged for those who do not have access to Medicare or private health insurance.

**Referrals** to the Family Planning Clinic can be made via E-Referral, or patients can contact the Family Planning Clinic lead on 0499 648 378 to book an appointment. For more information on referral criteria guidelines and to access E-Referral, please [click here](#).



## Meet the team

**Name:** Richard Sia

**Time at NH:** 8 years in a variety of roles

**What is your current role at NH?** GP Liaison Officer and VVED GP

**What is your background?** I completed an internship and general stream HMO training at Northern Hospital with a Diploma of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and GP training through the Royal Australian College of General Practice. After finishing my fellowship, I continued to work with Northern Health in the Fever Clinic, Vaccine Hub, currently Victorian Virtual ED and now as the new GPLO.

**How would you best describe yourself?** I'm outgoing and enjoy meeting people and trying new things. Food, travel and photography are my hobbies outside of work. I'll try to find an excuse to travel overseas and will always be daring to try new food.

**What do you enjoy about the work you do?**

I enjoy the variety of roles I have at the moment, including a mix of GP work, PPCC shifts, Virtual ED, and occasionally flying to Broken Hill, NSW, to work with the Royal Flying Doctors Service. I'm passionate about improving clinical care, including teaching registrars and running education events for doctors.

**Favourite quote?** "It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end." -Ursula K. Le Guin

**Who inspires you?** Probably my dad. He grew up with very little in Sibu, Malaysia as one of 10 other siblings. He studied hard there and got a scholarship to study in Australia. He's always worked hard to provide for my siblings and I and his extended family overseas. I hope he doesn't read this, or he'll get a big ego!



## Contact us

**Primary Care Liaison Unit-** Dr Richard Sia and Kirra McGaw

**E:** [nh-primarycareliaison@nh.org.au](mailto:nh-primarycareliaison@nh.org.au)

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

## Northern Health Electronic Medical Record (EMR)

Northern Health is going live with the EMR in September! The EMR implementation will make it possible for us to send secure messages to GPs. This will instantly allow discharge summaries to be downloaded in your medical software if you have HealthLink installed. More information to come soon!