

VMO Connect

ISSUE 1 / MAY 2020



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Health Care

Hawkesbury District Health Service

Welcome from the CEO

Welcome to our first VMO connect for 2020, a newsletter designed at keeping you informed about activities and developments at Hawkesbury District Health Service. We plan to use this forum to provide you with clarity around our goals while tracking our collective progress throughout the year.

Upfront, I'd like to acknowledge the leadership you have shown in the face of COVID 19. I understand the pressure this health crisis has placed on you. It has been a challenging time, as you manage the health of our communities while dealing with the business impact on your practices.

I am grateful for the support you have shown and the measured approach you have taken over this time. My door is always open to discuss any concerns or feedback you may have.

One of our greatest strengths as a hospital community is our ability to have open and frank discussions about the things that matter.

When challenges like these arise, it seems to bring out the best in all of us as we work constructively together to find feasible solutions.

Without the additional pressure of a global pandemic, 2020 was shaping up to be a challenging year for our hospital. Public-private hospital partnerships are complex arrangements. Our ongoing challenges are considerable, making relatively complicated contractual mechanisms work in one of the most complex of sectors.

We're also facing significant headwinds with a steady increase in the demand for our public services while seeing a decline in private activity due to increased

competition in the region, coupled with a rise in Australian's opting out of their private health cover. Now with the impact of COVID 19 on elective and non-urgent private surgeries, the situation has become increasingly complicated. These challenges not only face our business, but they also face yours.

We are committed to working with you, navigating these rapidly changing conditions, with the ultimate aim of ensuring the patients of the Hawkesbury community have access to the best standards of care.

Below you will find an analysis per speciality of last year's private activity as well as an indication of our progress for the first quarter of this year.

Our capacity to deliver optimum service levels to this community depends on us treating both public and private patients. Each

private patient we treat means we can care for an additional public patient. Your commitment to driving private work here is also an investment in the wellbeing of the entire Hawkesbury community.

I also know many of you have questions about our 2022 contract negotiations. While at this stage, I have no new news to share with you, as soon as more information comes to light, we'll use this and other forums to update you.

Strephon Billingham



Extraordinary times bring out extraordinary people.

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, the team at Hawkesbury District Health Service have been in awe of how our community has rallied in support of staff and doctors. We've had a steady stream of former patients returning with food and other gifts to express their thanks. There have been too many random acts of kindness to list them all. Some highlights however, include Susan Templeman MP, the federal member for Macquarie delivering 100 individually wrapped cakes freshly made by a local bakery for hospital staff. She wanted to express her thanks to our team's efforts in keeping the entire community safe!

The legends at Hunter Valley Roofing, have twice delivered Pizzas for our ED staff. One evening our wonderful Dr Sasikaran also bought pizza for all the ward staff!

Delicious snack packs were provided courtesy of a group of businesses who wanted to make sure that our frontline workers were kept nourished. While we also received beautiful scrub hats that were handmade and donated by a lady from WA who had been an ED orderly for over 30 years. Finally, one of our staff spotted a thank you sign in the window of a home in our local community that was drawn by a 9-year-old.



COVID 19 Updates

The Office of the CEO provides regular COVID 19 UPDATES with useful information relating to the Hospital and the broader LHD. If you are yet to receive these updates or would like them sent to an alternative address, please [click here](#) and Anna McDonald will accommodate your request.

Tracking our private revenue

SPECIALTIES IN ORDER OF REVENUE

QUARTER 1
2020

- GENERAL
- GERONTOLOGY
- ORTHOPAEDICS
- RESPIRATORY AND SLEEP
- CARDIOLOGY
- OB & GYN
- GASTROENTEROLOGY
- DENTAL
- PALLIATIVE & SUPPORTIVE CARE
- UROLOGY
- PAEDIATRICS
- CARDIOTHORACIC

2019

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- DENTAL
- CARDIOTHORACIC

Our April Net Promoter Score for Patient Experience sat at 76% across the hospital!



This score is up more than 9 points over the last 12 months. Thank you again, for your contribution and continued leadership in delivering outstanding care to our community.

Elective surgery Updates

Following the Prime Minister's previous announcements in recent weeks, we have recommenced non-urgent elective surgeries at our hospitals, in addition to continuing to provide urgent and emergency care.

We are working closely with our Specialists to schedule and prioritise surgeries to meet the needs of our patients and communities, while working within the 50 per cent activity limit set by the Federal Government.

Your insights into our facility

We've commenced a qualitative research project to gather your insights into our facility. Thank you to those who have contributed thus far. A summary of these findings is detailed here. We've fed your suggestions and feedback into an action plan, and we'll update you on our progress in coming editions.

In our discussions with VMOs we asked you what you valued most about working at HDHS, what was impacting the hospital's capacity to attract private patients and what strategies you thought we could collectively employ to increase private activity at the hospital and this is what you said....

MORE SUGGESTIONS?

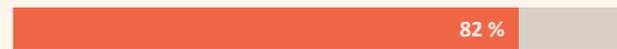
If you are yet to provide your input or have additional feedback, please [click here](#)

WHAT VMOs VALUE MOST ABOUT WORKING HERE

TOP RATED MENTIONS THUS FAR

Rural/ community /regional/ close to city

Close knit feel



Liked caring for Hawkesbury patients

Easy, appreciative delightful demographic, nicest community to work in



Excellent/ efficient public hospital

Many said best public facility they work in



Good over all culture



Relaxed environment

Easy place to work



Orthopedic surgeons interviewed indicated their core theatre staff were either good or excellent



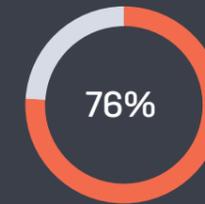
WHAT'S IMPACTING OUR CAPACITY TO ATTRACT PRIVATE PATIENTS

VMOs TOP MENTIONS THUS FAR



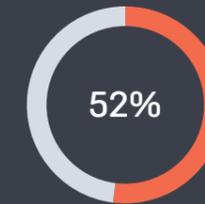
Not value for money

Lack of differentiation between public and private services made it difficult for patients to justifying using insurance (in part because the public services were good 12% and in part because the facility and services were not comparable to competitors 70%.)



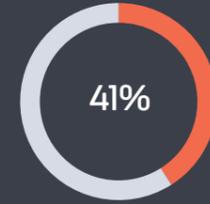
Worn out facility

The look of the facility, particularly considering significant competition in the surrounding region, impacted the hospital's capacity to attract private patients. 64% of doctors used phrases like "it's a hard sell."



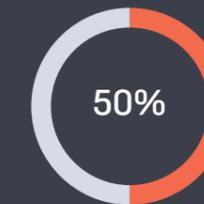
Public patients on private ward

Doctors identified that over the last year public patients on the private wards had increased and this was causing significant issues.



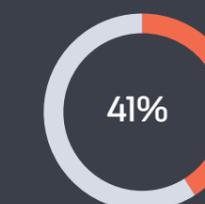
Discouraging private admissions

Doctors identified that they were increasingly hearing accounts of staff either not informing patients of their options or actively discouraging patients from using their private cover.



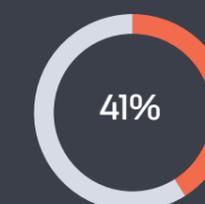
Negative culture on private ward

Doctors who treated patients on this ward indicated the negative culture on Barry Collins was impacting their capacity to attract private patients.



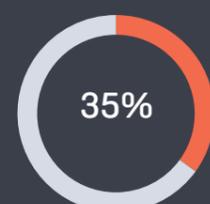
Lack of single rooms

Providing a single room is an expectation of private patients.



Need for marketing

Over the last few years there has been an influx of new GPs to the area and some GPs do not know the hospital had private services.

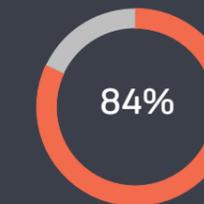


Anesthetist & out of pockets

Doctors who don't charge gaps or charge minimal gaps indicated other out of pocket costs were impacting their capacity to attract private patients

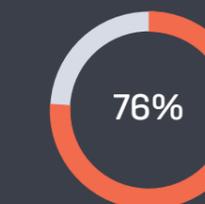
SUGGESTIONS MADE BY VMOs TO DRIVE MORE PRIVATE WORK TO HDHS

FEEDBACK FROM SPECIALISTS THUS FAR



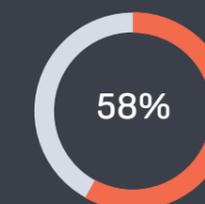
Cost reduction/transparency strategies

If HDHS could implement strategies that reduced or made costs more transparent , private work may increase.



Private patients in dedicated spaces

Separate private hospital, dedicated wing or split ward permanently to control flow



Improve the aesthetic of the hospital

Your suggestions

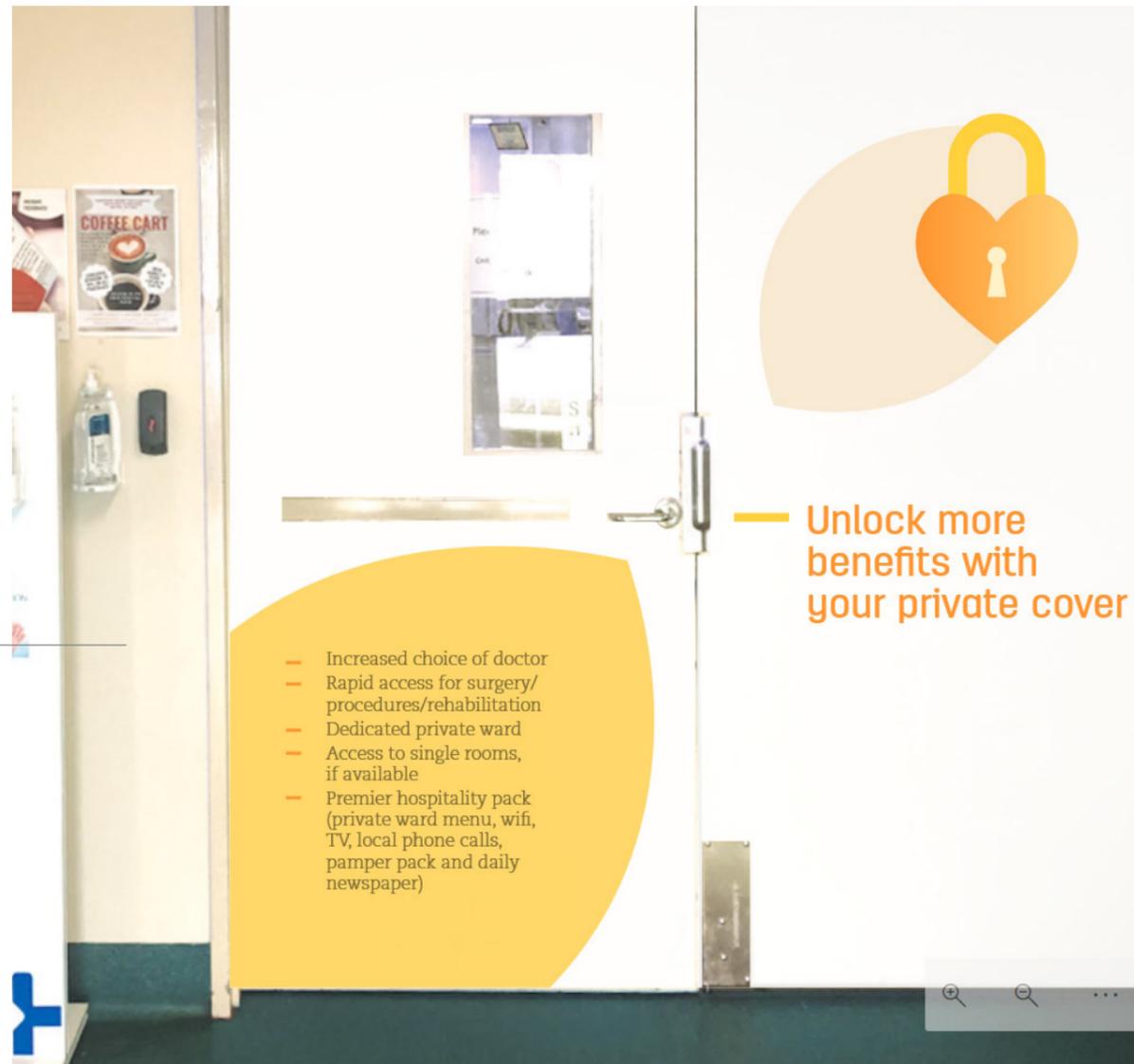
In the course of our discussions with VMOs, you've provided us with some valuable ideas on how we can improve our service generally, as well as increase our private activity. Below is an action plan we have developed in response to many of your suggestions.

YOU SUGGESTED

Some staff are not informing or are actively discouraging patients from using their private cover.

WE'RE TAKING ACTION

- Preparing scripts for ED
- Developing large scale displays for ED & Admissions
- Developing an internal campaign for staff underscoring the importance of providing prospective patients with choice around using their private cover. While also explaining that our ability to ensure optimum service levels for the entire Hawkesbury community is dependent on us increasing private activity.



YOU SUGGESTED

Invest in the physical environment and equipment at the hospital.

WE'RE TAKING ACTION

We're investing \$1.4mil in upgrading our facilities and equipment.

Facilities:

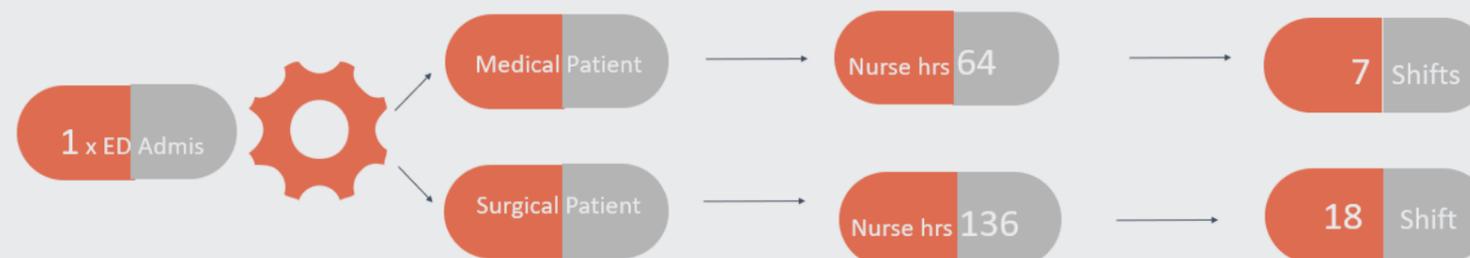
- The Barry Collins ward
- Day Surgery reception
- Coffee shop
- Main entry reception
- Emergency Department expansion
- Bariatric room
- Community Health
- CSSD

Equipment:

- Nurse call system - Frances Greenway & Revesby & Maria Locke ward & theatre
- HVAC chillers and compressors
- De-humidifiers
- BMS System
- Emergency Department mobile duress
- Emergency Department reception intercom
- Operating Theatre LED lights
- Operating Theatre Stryker Towers
- Electronic whiteboards
- Synchronised clocks x 3 for Maternity & 1 x Emergency Department
- Portable water tanks & legionella
- Hospital disabled access
- Digital TV channels
- Security cameras for cafeteria

PRIVATE PATIENT ADMISSIONS IMPACT ON NURSING HOURS

INTERNAL CAMPAIGN MESSAGING



5-YEAR ASSET LIFECYCLE PLAN

As well as undertaking a large scale \$1.4M redevelopment of our facility, we are developing a 5-year Asset Lifecycle plan, so we are not using equipment beyond their standard life expectancy.

Once this is developed, we can plan & budget for the most critical assets and thus mitigate the risk ensuring the safety of staff and patients.

YOU SUGGESTED

We need to market our services

WE'RE TAKING ACTION

- Developed a GP survey to understand the needs of local GPs
- Established a GP newsletter
- Preparing collateral for individual services
- Develop dedicated web content for private services
- Working with department heads on speciality specific strategies to drive private revenue to the hospital
- And once the redevelopment is complete, we'll relaunch our private service with an advertising and PR campaign.
- We've developed a marketing and business development plan for 2020.

2020 Marketing Plan

GOAL

Increase private activity

OBJECTIVES

1. VMO Engagement
2. Private fee minimisation/transparency strategies
3. Improve patient experience
4. Marketing and Communications

YOU SUGGESTED

Need greater clarity around out of pocket costs

WE'RE TAKING ACTION

Meeting with surgeons, physicians and anaesthetists, as well as the admissions team and support services to obtain greater clarity around out of pocket costs.

YOU SUGGESTED

Promote the concept of "quiet theatres."

WE'RE TAKING ACTION

We're establishing a "quiet theatre" policy with supportive collateral and displays

YOU SUGGESTED

Improve and differentiate the private patient service

WE'RE TAKING ACTION

We're establishing a Private Patient Experience Working party

YOU SUGGESTED

Address challenges facing the Barry Collins ward (public patients on ward, single rooms & patient experience issues)

WE'RE TAKING ACTION

We're undertaking a private containment & ward workshop in May to explore patient flow, doctor and staff engagement and, additional training and tools for department staff.

Call for Stories



If you would like to be included in our next GP newsletter please [click here](#)

GP Education



If you would like to participate in a GP education session in 2020 please [click here](#)

GP Visits

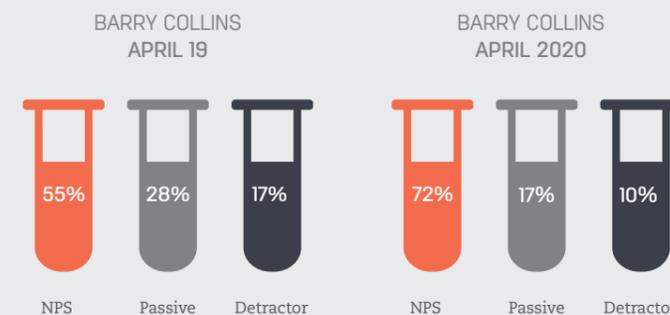


If you would like to visit GPs in the local area please [click here](#)

Good news about Barry Collins

Last year some VMOs raised concerns about the experience of private patients on the Barry Collins wards. In response, we implemented a number of measures which appear to have made a positive impact. When you compare the ward's April 2020 Net promoter scores, with the ward's scores from the same time last year, you can see a 17% positive increase.

The private ward results still remain 3.1% lower than the hospital-wide average for January, but it's important to acknowledge this progress. In our recent VMO interviews, many of you remain concerned about the patient experience on the private ward. As outlined, in the above, we plan to implement a number of strategies that directly address your feedback.



Annual General Meeting

Monday 1 June
An invitation to all
Visiting Medical Officer

In this meeting we will elect new committee members, review yearly activity and provide you all with important hospital updates.

Supply of personal protective equipment

As always, our priority is the safety of our patients, caregivers and Specialists. Ensuring the adequate availability of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is critical.

We are following all national and state guidelines and protocols to ensure the effective use of PPE to reduce risk for our patients, Specialists and caregivers. We are continuously providing education regarding the use of PPE to ensure it is used properly to help us maintain supply throughout this pandemic which as you know is putting pressure on stocks globally.