

Upcoming Events

Educational Event

Date:

Thursday 12 June 2025

Time:

6.30pm

Venue:

Queensland Cricketer's Club,
 Woolloongabba

BLMA and Avant Medico-Legal Symposium

Date:

Tuesday 5 August 2025

Educational Event

Date:

Tuesday 14 October 2025

End of year & Educational Event

Date:

Friday 28 November 2025

brisbanelma.org



Message from the BLMA President

Dr Hasthika Ellepola

Welcome to Issue 15 of SYNAPSE and our first edition for the year.

Firstly, I would like to thank our membership for re-electing me as your President at the AGM on 25th February. It is a privilege to serve in this position, and exciting as the BLMA goes from strength to strength.

Secondly, congratulations to our elected 2025 BLMA Management Committee. You will find the new committee featured on page 4. I would also like to extend my thanks to Dr Leanne Comino who decided not to renominate this year. Thank you for your hard work to help elevate the BLMA where it is today. Also, it is my pleasure to welcome Dr Holly Dignan as a new member to the committee.

2025 looks to be a busy year ahead for the BLMA. Our 2025 event schedule is already fully sponsored. I acknowledge our major sponsors, Mater and Q4 Financial and our event sponsors, GenesisCare, Ipsen, Pfizer, Perrigo, Avant, City Fertility and Radiology Group Queensland.

We also look forward to our first Medico-Legal Symposium in August sponsored by AVANT.

Our event schedule commenced on 25 February 2025 with our AGM and educational evening at Victoria Park Function Centre, sponsored by GenesisCare and Ipsen. We heard

from our very own Committee Member, former BLMA Vice President and Radiation Oncologist, Dr Gail Tsang and her colleague from GenesisCare, Dr David Schlect. A reminder that you are able to self log this educational activity on your CPD home.

Besides the excellent educational talks, we had the opportunity to be addressed by both Federal AMA President, BLMA Member and local GP, Dr Danielle McMullen; as well as Dr Michael Wright, RACGP President. I thank AMA Queensland Vice President, Dr Emilia Dauway, for her attendance and support of the BLMA.

As the BLMA continues to grow, we look to continue to increase our membership to ensure networking opportunities and connections for our members. Please feel free to encourage Doctors within your practices and Departments to sign up on our website. We will continue to focus on increasing our membership of more non-GP specialists and GP Registrars to represent and develop collegiality with a broad spectrum of Doctors on both sides of the river. Please also encourage any new Doctors who have commenced practice in the Brisbane area to join our group, as membership of BLMA provides an excellent opportunity for them to meet and get to know other established Brisbane Doctors in a collegiate environment.

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The Brisbane Local Medical Association welcomes contributions from members, especially "Letters to the Editor".

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Issue 16 | 2025 Newsletter

Content Deadline:
Monday 5 May 2025

- ▶ Would you like to comment or suggest articles to be published?
- ▶ What would you like to see in the newsletter?

Our circulation via email, online and by post, reaches medical practitioners all over Brisbane!

Contact: Dr Dilip Dhupelia
Email: info@brisbanelma.org



Are You a Member?

If you are not a member, please complete the application available on our website:



info@brisbanelma.org

Enquiries: Dr Manoj Bhatt
drmkbhatt@yahoo.co.uk

Are you listed on the Members Only Directory on our website? Are your details correct?

Directory form is available on the website.

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Synapse: Newsletter dates 2025

Newsletter Month	Content Due	Distribution
May	Monday 5 May	Late May
July	Friday 4 July	Late July
September	Monday 1 September	Late September
November	Monday 3 November	Late November



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brisbanelma.org

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Your 2025 Management Committee



President:
Dr Hasthika Ellepola



Vice President:
Dr Andrew Cronin



Treasurer:
Dr Manoj Bhatt



Secretary:
Dr Felicity Jensen



**Committee Member
and Deputy
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**Doctor in Training
Committee Member:**
Dr Holly Dignan



BRISBANE CENTRE FOR POSTNATAL DISORDERS (BCPND)

Queensland's only premier private centre for postnatal disorders and parenting mental health, with over 30 years of experience



At Belmont Private Hospital, we've created a state-of-the-art, purpose-built centre, the Brisbane Centre for Postnatal Disorders (BCPND), led by an exceptionally passionate multidisciplinary team, for those experiencing challenges related to pregnancy and the postnatal period up to two years, loss and earlier childhood.

Who should attend

Women, parents, same-sex couples and surrogate mother's:

- Experiencing Postnatal Depression, Anxiety or Hormonal Challenges or other mental health issues
- Facing Attachment or Bonding Challenges
- Dealing with Grief, Loss or Trauma
- Seeking Support for Parenting with its multiple challenges and Identity Issues

Why Choose Belmont Private for Postnatal Depression

- **Purpose-Built Inpatient Program:** A 14-bed unit offering specialised care for new mothers and parents.
- **Dedicated wings:** For women, young-adults, perinatal and trauma.
- **Experienced Multidisciplinary Team:** Over 50 years of expertise, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and nurses, delivering tailored support.
- **State-of-the-Art Facility:** Modern private rooms, parent-baby lounges, play areas, and a tranquil landscaped garden.
- **Family-Centric Care:** Wholistic support for both parents in a nurturing environment.
- **Structured Daily Programs:** Thoughtfully planned activities promoting healing and connection.
- **Dedicated Nursery:** Professional care for your baby, ensuring you get the rest you need.
- **Ongoing Support:** Access to day programs and community initiatives for continued care.

Aurora Belmont Private Hospital
 1220 Creek Road, Carina QLD 4152
belmontprivate.com.au

All that's needed is a GP for a referral to 'Belmont Private Hospital'

Patients can then contact us to arrange admission
 Phone: 07 3398 0238
 E: bel.bcpnd@aurora.com.au



Scan for more information or visit:
belmontprivate.com.au/facilities/bcpnd/



Varun Karnik
Bsc (Hons)

The VacSeen Project: Accessible Healthcare for All

By Varun Karnik Bsc (Hons)

Queenslanders experiencing homelessness face a multitude of challenges at the start of a new year. This summer has shaped up to be warm and wet, living costs continue to rise, and the new school year can bring extra financial pressures.

To support vulnerable Queenslanders, the Vacseen Project brings primary healthcare into accessible spaces. Our not-for-profit organisation was established in 2021 by a passionate group of Brisbane medical students and their colleagues, with the aim to prevent disease in people experiencing homelessness and other at-risk groups. This is achieved by taking medicine into familiar, non-medical spaces and making primary care as accessible as possible in these settings.

WHAT DO WE DO?

The VacSeen Project initially focussed on bringing flu and COVID vaccinations to vulnerable communities, during the height of the pandemic. As our healthcare landscape has shifted since then, VacSeen has adapted to meet the growing need for primary healthcare on the ground. Courtesy of a generous volunteer army of GPs, doctors, medical students and other healthcare workers across our sites, we now run regular free healthcare clinics where patients can present for any concerns, without needing to pay, book or have access to their Medicare card. This helps remove some of the barriers to obtaining medical care, for patients who may otherwise struggle with the cost or logistics of visiting a more formal practice. Currently, we run

free healthcare clinics across Queensland, with locations in Brisbane, Toowoomba, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Bundaberg.

WHAT KIND OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES DO WE OFFER?

Part of the excitement for our volunteer teams lies in the wide variety of presenting issues which patients bring to our clinics. These include acute issues (e.g. an asthma attack, animal bite, hypoglycaemia), chronic disease management (e.g. hypertension, iron deficiency), mental health and wound care. Given follow-up is challenging in this setting (due to the timing of clinics, volunteer nature of our teams, and patient factors), more



complex presentations which require further ongoing investigation or higher-acuity care are often referred to a friendly local GP or ED as appropriate. However, these encounters still give patients the opportunity to feel they have been seen and heard; build rapport with healthcare teams; and receive invaluable health education.

WHAT MAKES OUR VOLUNTEERS TICK?

Meet Varun, one of our co-founders and our CEO!

“When I first started working in this space, I was surprised by the people who walked into our clinics. They didn’t match my preconceived image of homelessness—they were everyday Queenslanders who had simply hit a rough patch and lacked the support systems to recover. The health of the homeless community is significantly worse than that of the general population, and they face countless barriers to accessing even the most basic healthcare.

I love the work we do because it brings medicine into non-traditional spaces. By partnering with other homeless service providers, we create opportunities for casual yet meaningful conversations about health. Over time, we become a trusted part of the community, offering care and support where it’s needed most. Being able to help in this way is both fulfilling and a privilege, not just for me, but for everyone involved.”

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

We are always looking for GPs to get involved! The time commitment can be as little as one night per month. We provide everything; the equipment, medical software (Best Practice), laptop, medical supplies, examination beds, medical student volunteers and more. Further, our medical indemnity insurance covers volunteers providing non-procedural medical services and treatment at VacSeen clinics. We nevertheless encourage our doctors to also

consult with their own indemnity providers. Please get in touch if you are interested in gaining valuable experience, making a real impact, and being part of a community dedicated to improving healthcare for those in need!
varun@vacseen.org.au.





THE VACSEEN PROJECT

BRINGING HEALTHCARE TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

What we do?

We are a non-profit that run GP-led outreach homeless health clinics around Queensland!



How can you help?

Donate medical equipment! Any second hand medical equipment that you think would be useful at an outreach primary care clinic, we would love to take off your hands!

Also, donate your time! We are always looking for GPs to come and help run our clinics - we provide all the equipment, and the time commitment can be as little as one night a month.



Contact: varun@vacseen.org.au

The high-income debt trap - avoiding the pitfalls of wealth without strategy

Dr Tom was a dedicated Medical Professional who, like many, found himself in a high-stress, high-reward cycle. His private practice was thriving, his income was strong, and from the outside, it looked like he had it all. But behind the scenes, financial stress was building.

A WEALTH MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY

by Kelly Hill, Director, q4 financial

The pressure of balancing work, wealth and debt

For years, Dr Tom had been running his practice without a structured financial plan. With a strong income, he felt cash flow rich, but in reality, he was drowning in debt.

After his first year in private practice, taxation responsibilities were payable and with no planning for these, Dr Tom was left with over \$600k+ in tax, a significant bank loan and ongoing tax due and payable on a quarterly basis. As his earnings grew, so did his spending. He invested in a share portfolio, bought an investment property, and even purchased a small home for his parents. He wanted to give back to his family and enjoy the rewards of his hard work. But soon, the spending escalated. He splurged on a sports car for himself, bought cars for his parents and sister, and took on more loans to fund it all.

Debt on debt on debt — until it became overwhelming.

Despite working long hours, Dr. Tom constantly felt financially stretched. He was juggling multiple loan repayments, managing rising business expenses, and paying a hefty tax bill every year. He was struggling with an overwhelming feeling that now he was only working to pay the 'Tax Man' and the bank. He knew he was earning enough but had no real strategy to build wealth sustainably.

The plan

Dr Tom had time, and he had great earning potential. By painting the long term vision and how he could achieve his financial aspirations, it was clear there was no need to panic but approach his position and vision in a disciplined pragmatic fashion. Then it was a matter of planning decade by decade, year by year, month by month!

We helped him renegotiate the debt on his home, his tax debt and helped him take charge of his cash flow to remain current with his ATO tax instalments and superannuation contributions.

An important part of this journey was to ensure that his wealth was appropriately protected - both by way of appropriate structures and personal insurances. Dr Tom's greatest and most valuable financial resource was his ability to earn income for the next 30 years (\$1m x 30 years = \$30,000,000). And as his net asset position grew, his reliance on insurance reduced and we continued to reduce his high levels of cover and save on premiums.

The Outcome: A secure and balanced life

With a clear plan in place, Dr Tom's financial stress is gone. Today, he enjoys:

- ✓ Freedom from overwhelming debt – the debt on his home is a fraction of what it was and, most importantly, a fraction of his net wealth.
- ✓ A clear wealth accumulation strategy – his super and non-super investments are growing strongly, which gives him comfort of knowing that one of his largest assets is in a very tax-effective structure, which will provide him and his family with financial freedom and the option of retirement (if and when he chooses).
- ✓ Peace of mind – no more sleepless nights worrying about taxes as he remains current with all ATO lodgements and commitments.

A lesson for other Medical Professionals

Dr Tom's story isn't unique. Many medical professionals fall into the trap of earning significant income and spending even more – only to realise they're not building financial security.

Ideally, Dr Tom would have consulted with us before commencing private practice. Had he been aware of the tax implications when moving from an employee into private practice, he would have managed his finances differently, and he could have achieved his financial dreams without unnecessary tax debt, non-deductible debt, and the associated stress.

Owning his dream home, investment portfolio, property, support for his family and luxury items – all could have been realised... just a little bit later.

The good news? With the right financial plan, it's possible to turn things around. At **q4 financial**, we specialise in helping medical professionals take control of their finances, reduce debt, and build lasting wealth. If you're feeling financially stretched despite a high income, we're here to help.

We offer a **FREE SECOND OPINION** for BLMA Members

All we need is 30 minutes and a copy of your recent financials



Proud Sponsor



e: enquiries@q4financial.com.au | w: q4financial.com.au



Avive Clinic Brisbane

Now open and delivering mental health care, differently.

Avive Clinic Brisbane is a newly-opened 63-bed private hospital that borders Brisbane's CBD and one of the city's major health hubs, home to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and Herston Quarter health precinct.

Treatment is delivered by an experienced team of mental health professionals and supported by the latest technology and health-promoting design principles.

Avive Clinic Brisbane features:

- private single bedrooms with ensuites
- a dedicated fitness studio and gymnasium
- group and art therapy rooms
- private consultation rooms
- a rooftop deck, patient lounges and retreat areas
- TMS suites.

Our experienced team specialises in the treatment of:

- drug and alcohol use disorders, including medical detoxification
- general adult psychiatry
- mood and anxiety disorders
- early life trauma
- adult trauma, including defence (Department of Veterans' Affairs and Australian Defence Force) and emergency first responders.

Avive Clinic Brisbane

Experienced consultant psychiatrists, accessible mental health and addictions treatment.



Dr Vicky Satchwell



Dr Vikas Moudgil



Dr Ben Wakefield



Dr Joanna Ng



Dr Bart Wlodek



Dr Tarun Sehgal



Dr Maya Tanham



Dr Bianca Dinu



Dr Daniel Wyczoński

Outpatient referrals specialistsuites.brisbane@avivehealth.com.au
Hospital admissions admissions.brisbane@avivehealth.com.au

Inpatient and day patient mental health programs



Anxiety and mood disorders

Help to manage anxiety and depression while improving quality of life.



Embodied emotion and movement

Understand the mind-body connection, and the relationship between mood disturbance, trauma and the body.



Dual diagnosis

Overcome addiction from alcohol and other drugs, and improve mental health and well-being.



Art therapy

Complementary therapy that uses art to interpret, express and resolve emotions and thoughts in a safe group environment.



Veterans and emergency services personnel

This patient cohort participates in their own group for shared support.

We're delighted to welcome Catherine Fitzsimmons, your dedicated business development and GP liaison manager.

Contact Catherine Fitzsimmons

M 0400 293 005 **E** catherinefitzsimmons@avivehealth.com.au

Rapid access mental health admissions

Now accepting inpatient and day program mental health referrals. DVA White and Gold Card holders accepted. 2-month waiting period for newly insured patients, or one-time waiver for patients upgrading current health cover applies.

Contact our admissions team directly:

T 1800 284 830 **E** admissions.brisbane@avivehealth.com.au **Online** avivehealth.com.au/doctors/referrals



Avive Clinic Brisbane 16 Bryden Street, Windsor QLD 4030 avivehealth.com.au
Referrals and admissions **T** 1800 284 830 **E** admissions.brisbane@avivehealth.com.au



Letter to the Editor

Dr Chris Perry

Dear Editor,

As Director of the AMAQ Foundation and member of the Brisbane Local Medical Association, I would like to express my thanks to BLMA members for their continuous support of the goals of the Foundation.

The AMA Queensland Foundation has raised over \$150,000 for family violence support services through the ongoing support of our generous donors and during 2024, came together to bring hope and safety to families affected by domestic violence.

As we begin 2025, it is now once again time to support Medical Students who have fallen into financial hardship so that they may complete their studies. Investing in future healthcare professionals is not only impactful - it's essential. The number of Medical Student Scholarship applications is increasing, with inflation, rent, and cost of living increases hitting students harder than ever. In 2024, the AMA Queensland Foundation had a record 84 applications, more than triple those of the previous year.

As we, the BLMA members know, the commitments of a medical degree can be challenging to meet without financial support. In 2024, the Foundation was able to award scholarships to three medical students, with an additional student funded by the Indian Medical Association of Queensland (IMAQ)



Dr Chris Perry
AMA Queensland Foundation Director
Past President AMA Queensland
Member of BLMA

under the Sponsor one Student (SoS) initiative.

This year we look forward to more BLMA members becoming new donors to support the work that the Foundation does.



Donate today



Welcome to Sports & Spinal Mt Gravatt

We are proud to announce and share our new Sports & Spinal clinic with you and the Brisbane medical community! Our newest clinic is conveniently located at **Nissan Arena, 590 Mains Rd, Nathan QLD 4111.**

Sports & Spinal Mt Gravatt has opened under the same premise as all our Sports & Spinal clinics across South East Queensland - to **inspire, engage, and empower** everyone on their journey of health & well-being. As one of the longest-standing Allied Health companies in Queensland, this is a testament to the quality of patient-first care we provide. Our team brings dedication, experience, and unrivalled passion to the Mt Gravatt community and surrounds.

Our quality allied health services and team's interest areas include:

- ✓ Physiotherapy
- ✓ Remedial Massage Therapy
- ✓ Exercise Physiology
- ✓ CSM Mat and Studio Pilates
- ✓ Lower Back & Spinal Pain
- ✓ Lower Limb
- ✓ Musculoskeletal Rehab
- ✓ Chronic Disease Management

+ MORE!

We look forward to embarking on this exciting journey and thank you for your continued trust and support.

MT GRAVATT

07 3184 6844

07 2145 8618

mtgravatt@sportsandspinalphysio.com.au



Dr Neil Astill

Egg Freezing – Life In The Freezer

Written January 2025

Dr A.N. Astill, Medical Director, City Fertility Brisbane Southside

Jessica Morris, Laboratory Supervisor, City Fertility Brisbane Southside

Fertility Specialists are receiving increasing numbers of women enquiring about oocyte cryopreservation or, as it is more commonly known, egg freezing. The resulting increase in elective egg freezing reflects the ongoing scientific improvement in IVF and also the socioeconomic changes that have occurred in recent decades.

Who should consider egg freezing?

Reasons for considering egg freezing, can be broadly grouped into two categories. Firstly, there are women at risk of premature menopause. There are also women who are at a higher risk of infertility, for example a history of endometriosis and women about to start treatment following a cancer diagnosis. The second group are often single women who, for various lifestyle and social reasons, wish

to delay parenting until later in their reproductive years.

If a woman has a stable, long-term relationship we often recommend embryo freezing as a preference over egg freezing, as the outcome of egg freezing is not as predictable at this point in time. For those not wishing to create embryos, egg freezing may act as an insurance against regret.

The reserve of the ovaries can be measured by a blood test for Anti-Müllerian Hormone (AMH) and an ultrasound measurement of the antral follicle count (AFC). AMH levels are reduced by oral contraceptives and progesterone devices and usually return to normal 3 months after cessation.

Cycle overview:

In preparation for an egg collection, FSH (gonadotrophins) is required for approximately 11 to 12 days in the

form of daily injections to stimulate egg production. A gonadotrophin-releasing hormone (GnRH) antagonist or an oral progesterone is used to suppress ovulation. Finally, approximately 36 hours prior to the egg collection, an agonist trigger injection is required so that the woman's eggs are matured for collection. This type of cycle is the best choice to reduce the likelihood of OHSS (Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome), a known risk associated with fertility treatments

The science of egg freezing:

Eggs are collected during an egg pick-up (EPU) procedure which occurs transvaginally. The procedure is generally quick and well tolerated by patients. After being collected from the ovaries, the cells surrounding the egg (called cumulus) are removed in preparation for the egg freezing. This process allows the scientist to assess egg



Figure 1: Cumulus oocyte complex (COC).

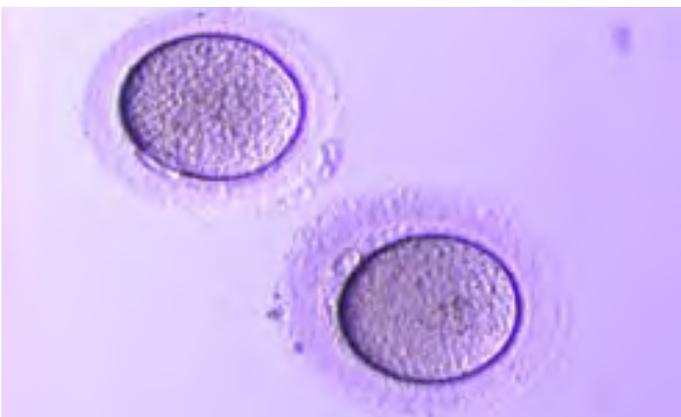


Figure 2: Meiosis II oocytes (MII)



Figure 3: Storage dewar for housing vitrified oocytes

maturity, with mature (meiosis II) eggs being suitable to freeze.

Worldwide, eggs are now frozen using vitrification methods which rapidly cool the cell from body temperature to -196°C . Cryoprotectants are used during the vitrification process to protect the eggs and have led to excellent survival rates upon thawing (upward of 90%). The thawing process involving the removal of cryoprotectants, followed by an incubation period of a couple of hours to allow the eggs to recover.

Eggs can be stored long term in specialised storage facilities containing liquid nitrogen or nitrogen vapour to maintain temperatures close to -196°C . Specialised storage facilities also utilise 24-hour monitoring and alarm

systems to ensure the security of the eggs in storage.

Post thawing, eggs are inseminated by ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection) and resulting embryos are routinely cultured to the blastocyst stage (approximately Day 5 post ICSI) prior to either being implanted or cryopreserved for future use.

Success rates:

Worldwide literature indicates that the most common age group for egg freezing is 30-34 years and for them to have an 80% chance of one child then 15 frozen mature eggs are needed.

Live birth rate depends on the patient's age and egg quality, with some reports indicating that frozen eggs can have comparable

pregnancy and birth rates to fresh eggs.

The psycho-social aspects of egg freezing are significant and must not be ignored. There should be counselling related to this by the IVF specialist and possibly a psychologist as well.

Costs for egg freezing will vary widely depending upon the indication as there is no Medicare rebate available for individuals undergoing elective egg freezing (i.e. no medical indication such as planned cancer treatment or risk of premature menopause).

Whilst there have been long-term follow-up studies on children born in the past 40 years since the first IVF baby was born, to date there are limited long-term studies following up children born from egg freezing.



Metro North Health GP Liaison Officer Update

I hope you have had a good rest over Christmas and the New Year and a good start to 2025.

Here's a small selection of articles from the weekly **Brisbane North PHN "GP Link" e-newsletter** which we encourage you to subscribe to receive your local hospital & health service news. There are multiple web links in this article, so please go to your medical association webpage to open the PDF to click the weblinks. As always if you need to reach GP liaison team please **email us**.

GPs - are you using GP Smart Referrals for your outpatient referrals?

GP Smart Referrals is the preferred way to send GP referrals to your local specialist outpatients clinics.

Smart Referrals has been developed to provide several benefits to GPs including

- ▶ Links to Best Practice & Medical Director,
- ▶ the essential information required in a GP referral for the referral to be accepted and triaged appropriately. It pulls essential results from your software,
- ▶ displays clinic wait times by facility,
- ▶ track referrals
- ▶ ability to include attachments to your referrals.

GP Smart Referrals is automatically updated whenever new outpatient referral criteria are updated (as listed below) so that you don't need to keep track of these changes.

If you would like to request training as a new user or upskilling training session, you can contact the Smart Referral Support Officer who is able to come to your practice to provide training to you and your staff. Email - gpsr@brisbanenorthphn.org.au.

Recent updates to Statewide Outpatient Referral Criteria

Several Clinical Prioritisation Criteria (CPC)/Statewide Outpatient Referral Guidelines have recently been updated. These guidelines provide information about the minimum information required for a referral to be triaged accurately and hence accepted. Changes are designed to streamline patient pathways

and ensure timely and appropriate specialist care. These changes have been updated in GP Smart Referrals system, **Brisbane North HealthPathways** website and Metro North Health's **Refer Your Patient** outpatient referral guidelines pages.

Metro North Health **Diabetes and Endocrinology** Referral Guidelines updates include:

- ▶ new guidance on the **assessment of metabolic surgery suitability, endocrine neoplasia/ tumour genetics, and gender incongruence**.

General Paediatrics updates include new **Lymphadenopathy & Chronic Tics and Tourette syndrome**

Respiratory & Sleep Medicine updates include :

- ▶ **Mediastinal Lymphadenopathy, Pulmonary Nodules** (including links to the Fleischner Society Guidelines for the follow-up and management of indeterminate **pulmonary nodules** detected incidentally on CT) & Non-tuberculosis Mycobacterial Infections

Paediatric Sleep Medicine updates include:

- ▶ OSA , Toddler or baby with night waking/settling issues, Circadian rhythm disorders , Parasomnias, Cerebral palsy, significant neurological disability,



Syndromes at higher risk of sleep disordered breathing (SDB), Excessive Daytime Sleepiness (EDS)/narcolepsy

Paediatric Surgery updates include:

- ▶ Significant reviews to the Lymphadenitis pathway (previously known as the Enlarged Lymph Nodes pathway), Significant reviews to the Intraoral Frenulum Issues pathway including advice on lip ties.

Wound Management changes include:

- ▶ **Venous Leg Ulcer** – including specific advice on the use of lower leg compression dressings. There are useful links to various [QUT healthy skin and ulcer management resources](#). These may also be appropriate to share with practice nursing staff.
- ▶ Please note that ulcers or wounds on the high risk foot (ie diabetic foot ulcer/disease) are to be referred using the **Vascular High Risk Foot CPC** or **Diabetic High Risk Foot CPC**

Introducing the Statewide Fertility Preservation Service at RBWH

Metro North is excited to announce that the Statewide Fertility Preservation Service (the Service or SFPS) began operations at RBWH.

GPs and specialists can refer patients to RBWH Gynaecology to access the service (GP Smart Referrals preferred). Please see **Refer Your Patient** for information regarding referral requirements.

New website helps patients find new local healthcare options- FindCareFast

[FindCareFast.com.au](#) has recently been launched to help consumers in the Brisbane North and Brisbane South regions to find health care services fast and enable consumers to find the new urgent care options now available based on their postcode.

The site has collated a large range of local health services to support patients (based on the patient's postcode and urgency to be seen) including:

1. 13 HEALTH Nurse led advice
2. Available GP appointments (based on HotDoc & HealthEngine booking sites)
3. After hours services
4. Urgent Care Clinics
5. Minor Injury & Illness Clinics
6. Mental Health Supports
7. Queensland Virtual Emergency Care Service (formerly Virtual ED)
8. Emergency Departments

We encourage practices to explore the website so that you are informed about what it displays to ensure it meets the needs of your patients and practice. This website could be useful to share with for your reception staff when you have no urgent GP appointments available as alternatives to sending patients to the emergency department.

Latest Brisbane North HealthPathways supporting GPs

The Brisbane North HealthPathways are local management guidelines and service navigation website developed to support local GPs. They are written by local specialist subject matter experts in collaboration with GP Clinical Editors to make them relevant to the GP audience.

Recently updated Health Pathways include [Advanced Care Planning](#), [Plagiocephaly](#), [Screening and diagnosis of diabetes in adults](#), [Differences of sex development](#), [Prediabetes](#), [Depression in older adults](#), [Disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs](#), [Heart murmurs in children](#).



Expanding Your Practice

Many doctors seek to open their own private practice at some point in their careers. For those that already own practices, there are sometimes compelling reasons for considering expansion of the practice. Whether you're considering opening new rooms or expanding your practice in your current or in an additional location, your financial circumstances and implications will be different.

While there are many reasons why doctors decide to start a practice, common motivations we see include:

- ▶ You want more say in the way you provide patient care.
- ▶ You want more control over your earnings.
- ▶ You like to lead others.
- ▶ You want the flexibility to choose where you work.
- ▶ You feel your career has hit a ceiling and you want room to grow.
- ▶ You already have a strong network of doctors and allied health professionals who want to join the business with you.
- ▶ You crave a better work/life balance.

However, starting a medical practice can be challenging, as it demands new skills and a fresh mindset. It means becoming an entrepreneur,

a business owner, an employer, a manager and a team leader, as well as a doctor. While becoming a practice owner is an exciting step in your career, there are many complexities of practice ownership that need to be considered. This includes your business plan, financing, compliance obligations, employment matters, practice setup requirements and insurance implications, just to name a few. Given the substantial financial commitment, it's important to get it right.

Expanding or opening a new practice calls for planning. There's a lot to think through such as location, staffing, the services that will be offered from the rooms, fit out and the equipment needed. A good starting point is to develop a business plan that addresses the opportunities, the risks, likely costs and projected revenue.

A well-thought-out business plan is a must for any new practice. It can make all the difference to the future success of your practice. Like most doctors, you may never have written a business plan or understand the different components that give you certainty and clarity about the way forward. Working with a medical specialist business consultant will assist by providing industry insights that help you include realistic numbers for your budget, as well as support and guidance for doctors who are 'doing it for the first time.'

A good business plan is a roadmap for your business. It allows you to highlight your vision and values, holds you accountable and gives you something to strive towards. Include insights to inform key decisions, and check points to assess whether you are on track. Once completed, it should give you confidence that your plans are achievable.

There are several aspects to a practice that require significant capital expenditure. You may need to buy into an existing practice, or for your own practice, set it up to look and function in the way you need it to. There will also be equipment that's essential to providing the services you plan to offer. Funding these can be done through different types of loans to help you achieve your goals. The loans need to be specific to the type of investment (asset class) as the lifespan and depreciation varies accordingly.

The Avant Finance Team have published a handbook that includes all aspects that need to be considered.

It is called **"Unlock your Future"**



Avant's medical finance specialists can help you create the business and future that you desire and can be contacted on **1300 992 208**.



Brisbane South PHN update

Refugee and asylum seeker

Does your practice care for patients who are of refugee-background or asylum seekers who would benefit from free occupational therapy?

Brisbane South PHN and Mater Health are delighted to announce the establishment of the Mater Refugee and Asylum Seeker Occupational Therapy Program (RASOTP).

About the Mater Refugee and Asylum Seeker Occupational Therapy Program (RASOTP)

Services offered (at no cost to the client) include:

- ▶ functional capacity assessments to support NDIS applications
- ▶ home safety reviews and minor modifications
- ▶ assessment of activities of daily living
- ▶ equipment prescription (including equipment provided by the Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme).

Eligibility criteria for the program (all must be met):

- ▶ Resident of the **Brisbane South PHN region**
- ▶ Refugee background (arrived via the Humanitarian Settlement Program within the past 5 years), or an asylum seeker
- ▶ 0 to 17 years and with a neurodevelopmental or physical health condition or disability, or 18 years or over and with a primary physical disability or condition
- ▶ Requires an assessment or short-term OT intervention
- ▶ Referral from either a General Practitioner, Mater Integrated Refugee Health Service or Metro South Refugee Health Service.

How to refer your patients into the program

To refer a patient to this service, please send a referral letter securely via Medical Objects: to **"Mater Refugee Health Service"**: RM4101000BD or via fax **07 3163 8455**.

Your referral should:

- ▶ be on your letterhead
- ▶ include the referrer's details

- ▶ specify patient details and reason for referral
- ▶ address the eligibility criteria including refugee/asylum seeker status.

The client, the referrer (and GP of the patient if not the referrer) can expect to receive a response to the referral, confirmation of any care plan if implemented, and a discharge summary from the service.

For further enquiries, please email **RASOTP@mater.org.au** or phone **07 3163 1760**.

Further support for healthcare providers

- ▶ Brisbane South PHN's Multicultural Health team supports primary health care professionals to provide best-practice care to patients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Find helpful information, resources, and contacts on our website.

- ▶ [Updated interpreter guide for primary care professionals | Brisbane South PHN](#)
- ▶ [Australian Refugee Health Guide](#)



Dr Nick Yim
AMA Queensland President



Dr Brett Dale
AMA Queensland CEO



ama.com.au/qld

AMA Queensland

President and CEO update

March 2025

This year, AMA Queensland has already secured several wins for Queensland doctors, patients and the community. Most notably, our continued advocacy against payroll tax saw the QRO issue updated guidance for non-GP specialists, providing businesses with clarity and assurance.

We also welcomed the launch of the Open Hospitals portal and funding boost for Surgery Connect and continue to seek to work with the government to ensure these initiatives are effective in the long-term.

Payroll tax certainty

AMA Queensland President Dr Nick Yim appeared before a parliamentary committee inquiry into the Revenue Legislation Bill 2024 in January, speaking to the need to extend payroll tax exemption certainty to non-GP specialists.

The parliamentary committee recommended the Queensland Revenue Office (QRO) issue clear and updated guidance about existing exemptions that may apply to non-GP specialists, and confirm whether GP practices need to complete the onerous disclosure obligations currently required under the amnesty.

Less than three weeks after the inquiry, the [QRO wrote to AMA Queensland with updated guidance on the amnesty and links](#) to information about existing exemptions that may apply to non-GP specialists.

Doctors and practice owners have been struggling to clarify what they must do under payroll tax laws and the QRO's amnesty, and this updated guidance will help these businesses know where they stand.

We are disappointed the committee did not simplify payroll tax for all medical practices and will continue to advocate for inclusion of non-GP specialists.

Read our media release:

<https://www.ama.com.au/qld/news/Payroll-tax-certainty-for-all-medical-practices>

Workforce Working Group

The health sector is currently experiencing the highest turnover since the peak of COVID-19 in 2020, with rural and remote regions suffering the most at a turnover rate of 9.5 per cent – five per cent higher than in metropolitan areas.

To respond to this turnover and meet the increasing demand, it is projected that workforce will need to increase by 30.3 per cent by 2032.

This is a complex issue requiring multifaceted solutions, which is why AMA Queensland has established its new Workforce Working Group to help guide government policies directed at attracting and retaining Queensland's health workforce.

The group commenced on Thursday 16 January and is working to provide advice in the lead up to the Queensland Budget in June 2025.

Read more:

<https://www.ama.com.au/qld/news/Urgent-collaboration-needed-to-solve-workforce-crisis>

Free flu vaccine continues

For the past three years, Queensland has led the nation in making flu jabs free. We are pleased to see the new government continue Queensland's leadership by funding the annual free influenza vaccination program for 2025.

This year's program commenced on Saturday 1 March.

We continue to call on the state government to make this program permanent, similar to the RSV and meningococcal vaccines, and to advocate for the influenza vaccine to be made free for all Australians under the National Immunisation Program.

Read our media release:

<https://www.ama.com.au/qld/news/Free-flu-vaccines-remain-available-to-Queenslanders-in-2025>

Surgery Connect funding boost

In February, the state government announced a \$100 million investment in Surgery Connect.

We commend the government for taking a step towards stabilising Queensland's growing elective surgery wait lists in line with the recommendations in our Surgical Wait List Roundtable Action Plan.

However, fundamental reform of how hospitals are run and funded remains crucial to ensure all Queenslanders have equitable access. Increasing outpatient surgical activity must be implemented with our long-term recommendations to ensure wait lists are not only stabilised but reduced.

We continue to urge the government to implement the rest of our recommendations to reduce wait times and ensure no Queenslanders is suffering from inequitable access to essential care.

Read our media release:

<https://www.ama.com.au/qld/news/Elective-surgery-support-must-reduce-wait-times>

Satellite hospital name change and consultation

Following AMA Queensland advocacy, the Queensland Government conducted a survey seeking more appropriate name alternatives for satellite hospitals, aiming to reduce confusion around their services offered.

The clinical advisory group established to consider the survey results supported the survey's overwhelming recommendation to call the facilities Satellite Health Centres.

This decision is one step towards ensuring all Queenslanders can access timely, essential health care services by reducing confusion and minimising

fragmentation of care. However, we must continue with a public education campaign to eliminate the risk of people with life threatening conditions presenting to these health centres.

In addition to the name change, AMA Queensland is working with Queensland Health to provide input, including our members' perspectives, to their evaluation of the facilities.

If the government does not work with local practitioners, the facilities will continue to risk confusing patients, poaching staff and duplicating existing services.

Read the transcript:

<https://www.ama.com.au/qld/news/One-step-forward-with-new-satellite-hospital-name>

Real time emergency department data

The state government's launch of its Open Hospitals portal is a welcome first step in modernising our health system.

AMA Queensland has urged the government to introduce such a model for years, including in our Ambulance Ramping Roundtable and Surgical Wait List Roundtable Action Plans.

We cannot improve hospital performance and patients cannot make informed decisions about when and where to seek treatment without transparent and up-to-date information. Real-time data also has the potential to allow clinicians to better manage hospital resources, diverting them where they are needed most.

However, the portal still has a long way to go if it is going to provide a full picture of the situation in our hospitals at any given moment in time.

Our members have advised us of some frustrations faced by emergency department doctors and patients, including that the capturing of data currently does not reflect the patient's journey.

We look forward to working with the government to expand the metrics and other information available in the portal

so it can truly help transform our health system for the future.

Read more:

<https://www.ama.com.au/qld/news/realtimedata>

Nurse-led clinics inadequately funded

Queensland Health has advised that a rapid review of its nurse-led walk-in clinics revealed they are not adequately funded to operate during the hours and with the staff announced by the former government.

Nurses are an integral part of general practice multidisciplinary teams which are proven to provide the highest quality, best practice care for patients. However, AMA Queensland has always been concerned that these clinics risk fragmenting patient care and robbing existing primary care services of their essential staff.

The department advised it will now undertake relevant industrial processes, including consultation on business cases for change, to help the clinics operate within the approved funding envelope.

Read more:

<https://www.ama.com.au/qld/news/nurseledclinics>

Medical Student Scholarships

The AMA Queensland Foundation offers its annual Medical Student Scholarships to financially disadvantaged students studying an MBBS course or equivalent at a university in Queensland.

Applications are open for 2025, and we encourage all students seeking support to continue studying and achieve their dream of becoming a doctor to apply.

Scholarships of \$10,000 paid in two equal instalments will be awarded to up to three students this year.

Read more:

<https://www.ama.com.au/qld/news/Support-for-medical-students-experiencing-financial-hardship>



Discover Vancouver

By Orbit World Travel

A city of nature, culture, and culinary delights

If you're looking for a city that blends stunning natural beauty with world-class dining, arts and adventure, Vancouver is your perfect destination. Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Coast Mountains, this vibrant Canadian city offers something for everyone - from outdoor enthusiasts to food lovers and culture seekers. Whether it's your first visit or your tenth, there's always something new to discover.

Embrace the outdoors

One of Vancouver's biggest draws is its spectacular natural scenery. No matter where you go, you'll find breathtaking views and plenty of ways to enjoy the fresh air.

- ▶ Stanley Park – the crown jewel of Vancouver. Walk or cycle the seawall, explore the lush trails, visit the famous Totem Poles, or relax at one of the beaches.
- ▶ Capilano Suspension Bridge – a must-visit for adventure seekers. Walk across the 137-metre-long bridge that sways above a stunning forested canyon.
- ▶ Grouse Mountain – ride the Skyride gondola for incredible city views, or if you're feeling energetic, take on the Grouse Grind (a challenging but rewarding hike!).
- ▶ Granville Island – stroll through artisan markets, pick up fresh produce and enjoy waterfront views with a coffee in hand.
- ▶ Whale watching – hop on a boat tour from the harbour and spot orcas, humpback whales and other marine life.

Indulge in the food scene

Vancouver is a foodie's paradise, known for its fresh seafood, international cuisine and innovative restaurants. Here's where to eat:

- ▶ Miku – for the best sushi in town, try their famous flame-seared aburi sushi.
- ▶ Tojo's – a legendary Japanese restaurant where the chef invented the famous BC Roll.
- ▶ L'Abattoir – a stylish spot in historic Gastown serving creative West Coast cuisine.
- ▶ St. Lawrence – if you're craving French-Canadian comfort food, this charming bistro is the place to go.
- ▶ Vij's – a must for Indian food lovers. Their lamb popsicles are legendary.
- ▶ Nightingale – contemporary, share-style dishes with a great atmosphere.



Looking for something casual? Grab a Japadog (a uniquely Vancouver-style hot dog with Japanese toppings) or hit up one of the city's many food trucks.

Explore the arts and culture scene

Vancouver has a thriving cultural scene, offering everything from Indigenous art to live theatre and music.

- ▶ Museum of Anthropology – learn about Canada's Indigenous history and marvel at incredible totem poles and artefacts.
- ▶ Vancouver Art Gallery – home to an impressive collection of Canadian and international art.
- ▶ Gastown – wander through this historic district, check out the famous Steam Clock, and visit trendy galleries and boutiques.
- ▶ Theatre and live music – catch a show at The Orpheum, Queen Elizabeth Theatre or a local jazz bar in Yaletown.

Experience Vancouver after dark

The city doesn't slow down when the sun sets. Whether you want a stylish cocktail bar, a lively brewery or a night of live music, there's something for every vibe.

- ▶ The Keefer Bar – a Chinatown favourite with creative cocktails and a moody atmosphere.
- ▶ Fairmont Pacific Rim Lobby Lounge – live music, elegant cocktails, and a chic setting.
- ▶ Granville Street – the city's main nightlife hub, packed with bars and clubs.
- ▶ Breweries in Mount Pleasant – Vancouver has a booming craft beer scene. Stop by places like 33 Acres or Brassneck Brewery.

Your invitation to explore Canada

In September 2025, AMA Queensland invites you to Vancouver for its annual overseas conference.

To help you make the most of your Canadian adventure, Orbit World Travel has curated spectacular pre- and post-conference travel options with exclusive bonus inclusions:

- ▶ Luxury Alaska Cruise – explore the breathtaking Alaskan coastline aboard Regent Seven Seas Cruises, with up to \$1,200 USD onboard spending included.
- ▶ Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge – indulge in a luxurious retreat on Vancouver Island, with a \$500 CAD credit towards heli-tours.
- ▶ Rocky Mountains Explorer Tour – join a dedicated AMA Queensland group tour, complete with Fairmont resort stays.
- ▶ Rocky Mountaineer Rail – experience the iconic rail journey through the stunning Banff, Lake Louise and Jasper landscapes.

This is your chance to combine professional development with an unforgettable adventure.

Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool (IAR-DST) training



The IAR-DST complements clinical judgment when making mental health referrals.

The IAR-DST is a national roll-out from the Department of Health and Aged Care assisting referrers to find the most appropriate localised care - at any age or stage. It is designed to streamline referrals and establish a common language in the mental health sector. Brisbane North PHN is offering online and in-clinic training sessions to help General Practitioners and GP registrars learn how to use the IAR-DST and provide clinicians with all the information needed to implement the tool in a way that suits their practice.

\$300 incentive payment available to GPs and GP registrars.

CPD POINTS 2025 2 hours through RACGP and ACRRM



Register for IAR training

Register for an online training session using this QR code



brisbanenorthphn.org.au/practice-support/iar

GP and patient benefits

- Improved efficiency of mental health referrals
- Consistency of patient experience
- Reduced medico-legal risks
- Increased patient access with appropriate local referrals
- Streamlined documentation and handover to service providers

iar@brisbanenorthphn.org.au

07 3630 7300

“An **informative, succinct and thorough** workshop.”

“The resources were **exactly what I was looking for.**”

Event Wrap up

Our 2025 event schedule commenced with our AGM and Educational dinner on 25th February 2025 at Victoria Park Function Centre. The event was made possible thanks to event sponsors GenesisCare and Ipsen and platinum sponsor, Avant.

The evening started with our AGM which included elections of Management Committee positions, our President's report by re-elected President, Dr Hasthika Ellepola, presentation of our audited financials by Treasurer, Dr Manoj Bhatt and an update on membership and our platinum sponsorships by 2025 Vice President, Dr Andrew Cronin.

Our AGM was followed by our educational evening where we heard from our very own Committee Member and former Vice President, Dr Gail Tsang who presented a talk on "Clinical Updates on SBRT for Prostate Cancer". Dr Tsang's talk was followed by her GenesisCare colleague and radiation oncologist, Dr David Schlect and his talk on "Radiation Therapy for the Treatment of Benign Conditions"

The evening concluded hearing from AMA President and BLMA Member, Dr Danielle McMullen on Federal AMA "Vision, Advocacy and Wins"

We were delighted to have our special guests for the evening, Dr Danielle McMullen, AMA President, Dr Emilia Dauway, AMA Queensland Vice President, and RACGP President, Dr Michael Wright.

Our next Educational dinner event will be held at the Sofitel, Brisbane Central on Monday 31st March 2025 at 6:30pm so keep an eye out for the ticket link in your emails and get in quick to avoid missing out, as we have had sold out events this year! We look forward to seeing you at our final event of the year!



Advertising Kit 2025

The Brisbane Local Medical Association’s Newsletter Synapse is a bi-monthly publication.

DISTRIBUTION

- ▶ Circulated to specialists, GPs, Private and Public Hospitals, allied health workers, practice managers, retired doctors, Public or Private Sector Doctor, Doctors in Training and GP Registrars throughout the Greater Brisbane Region.
- ▶ All newsletters are uploaded to the BLMA website which attracts strong traffic – brisbanelma.org

NEWSLETTER

- ▶ Electronic and printed copies are distributed.
- ▶ Each edition is between 20 and 28 pages.
- ▶ All content is to be approved by the editor.
- ▶ Advertising guidelines apply.
- ▶ Please see Newsletter for frequency for content due deadlines and distribution dates.

If you are interested in advertising in SYNAPSE please contact:

Renee O’Brien
Phone 07 3872 2248
Email info@brisbanelma.org

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Dr Dilip Dhupelia
Email info@brisbanelma.org

NEWSLETTER FREQUENCY 2025

Month	Content Due	Distribution
May	Monday 5 May	Late May
July	Friday 4 July	Late July
September	Monday 1 September	Late September
November	Monday 3 November	Late November

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While Brisbane Local Medical Association will do all possible to ensure advertising material is reproduced as intended, the responsibility is firmly with the client/ advertiser to supply advertising material according to our specifications.

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- \$550 or 3 ads for \$1400
- ▶ 186mm (w) x 246mm (h)
- ▶ No bleeds or crop marks
- ▶ PDF format

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- \$425 or 3 ads for \$1100
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- ▶ No bleeds or crop marks
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Quarter Page Ad

- \$275 or 3 ads for \$675
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Business Card Size Ad

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Advertorials

- \$475 or 3 ads for \$1200
- Please note the following discounts:*
- ▶ 10% discount for 3 or more placements.
- ▶ 20% discount for 6 placements (1 year).

CLASSIFIEDS

All classifieds are subject to the Editor’s discretion.

- ▶ No charge to current BLMA members.
- ▶ Non-members: \$100.
- ▶ Word count no more than 120 words.

ARTWORK SPECIFICATIONS

- ▶ All artwork must be supplied as a CMYK high-res/print ready PDF.
- ▶ All artwork is to exclude bleed, crop marks, registration bars, spot or PMS colours and registration colours.
- ▶ All fonts must be embedded in the PDF or converted to outlines.
- ▶ No type should be smaller than 6 points.
- ▶ If specifications are not met artwork needs to be resubmitted by the due date.

ADVERTORIALS SPECIFICATIONS

- ▶ Copy to be supplied in a Word Doc.
- ▶ Image should be high-res and the file size should be at least 1MB.

