



Welcome from the Minister

Dear colleagues

I hope you have all enjoyed the summer and had some time to relax.

It has been a busy summer for the GHA with the opening of the new Children's Health Centre, the creation of a polyclinic to support the Small Island Games, the launch of a new GHA Staff Award scheme, workshops covering both health and wellbeing and the GHA values, and the creation of new isolation units in the Intensive Care Unit. Well done to everyone involved in making these projects a success.

In this second edition of GHA Matters, you will find stories about some of the other great work carried out across the GHA. In these articles you will see how staff are trying to bring the WE CARE values to life, clearly demonstrating compassion, excellence and working together.

I hope you find it an interesting and inspiring read.

Best wishes

Hon Neil F Costa

Minister for Health, Care and Justice

Opening of the new Children's Health Centre

In July the GHA was delighted to unveil its new Children's Health Centre, providing a dedicated space for the young people of Gibraltar.

The Centre offers a full range of services, including seven dental clinics, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, mental health services, dietetics, child health and immunisations. The first services started at the centre on July 17, with a further phase of services added on August 12. Specialist services start this month, including community midwifery, specialist GP clinics, consultant clinics and the new adolescent service.

The Children's Health Centre was launched by Chief Minister Fabian Picardo, the Minister for Health, Care and Justice the Hon Neil Costa and Deputy Medical Director Dr Krishna Rawal.

Deputy Medical Director Dr Krishna Rawal said: "We are delighted to have this fantastic new space created with the needs of children at its heart. It is bright, colourful and spacious – a place where children can feel safe and happy. We are equally excited to see the services expand and develop over time, as we review our services and work closely with our health care teams and services users. Bringing all of these services for children in one place is far better for families and allows us to continue to integrate and strengthen the services we offer for children and young people."



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Providing health services for the Island Games

ATHLETES were helped to stay healthy and recover from any injuries during the Island Games, thanks to GHA staff.

For the duration of the games, a dedicated polyclinic helped athletes with more than 90 injuries and illnesses, such as fractures, an asthma attack, concussion and heat exhaustion.

As well as helping the athletes, the polyclinic helped to avoid overwhelming GHA's normal services.

Dr Elaine Flores and Dr Ricardo Pinto were appointed as Chief Medical Advisers for the Island Games. Dr Flores said: "Colleagues from around the GHA were involved in planning beforehand and were managing services during the competition itself. It was a real team effort. We were proud to play such an important role in the games and to have helped people keep everyone safe and well."

The comprehensive GHA effort included:

- A dedicated polyclinic. The medical team of Steven Soussi, A&E nurses Pamela Estella and Stephanie Stevens, and plaster technician Adill El Bakali, were supported by three admin officers.
- Creating new pathways. Pharmacy, wards, A&E, radiology and other hospital teams helped to make sure clear pathways were in place for any patients needing secondary care.
- Risk assessments. Assessments were carried out for each of the venues and events by Chief Ambulance Officer Sigurd Haveland and Chief Station Officer Noguera.
- Games medical seminar. Sport nutritionist Louise-Anne Baitson ran a session for athletes to help them with issues like sun protection, hydration, supplementation and injury prevention.
- On-site presence. At high-risk events, a doctor-nurse team and paramedic crews were in attendance.



Fulfilling a patient's dying wish

Compassion is a core GHA value, and staff regularly go above and beyond to help and support patients. This is more important than ever when a patient comes towards the end of their life.

During the summer, a patient of Moroccan origin expressed a desire to spend his final days with his family in his home town, and the GHA team rallied around to make it happen.

Two nurses and the GHA ambulance crew travelled with the patient by ferry to Tarifa, providing attentive care to him throughout. The patient was kept comfortable for the journey and provided with comfort and reassurance as he prepared to return home.

For the final part of the journey from Tangiers, he was transferred to a Moroccan ambulance at the request of the Moroccan police, but the two nurses travelled on with him, taking him right to his family. There they explained more about his medications and how the family could help him in his last days.

The team ended up stuck in Morocco overnight as the last ferry of the day was cancelled, but knew they had done something that really mattered to the patient.

Staff nurse Karima Senouni, who carried out the transfer with staff nurse Alberto Luque, said: "On arrival the family were waiting for us they were all very happy to see him and very grateful for the care given by the GHA.

"It was a fulfilling experience to assist him with his dying wish. If the opportunity arose to do something so important again, I would not hesitate to do it."

Keeping patients safe through pharmacist ward rounds

In May pharmacists started regular ward rounds to provide more support to patients and clinical staff. Early feedback for the scheme is positive, with staff appreciating the pharmaceutical expertise and patients are being kept safer due to the extra checks taking place.

While on the ward, pharmacists check the correct doses are being given, check that prescribing is in accordance with guidelines, ensure medications are appropriate for that particular patient (for example if they have other conditions or if there could be a conflict with an existing medication), check factors like kidney function and suggest alternative medications.

They are also a source of advice for staff, who might want to check something like how a particular intravenous (IV) medication is reconstituted. They can also help patients, giving advice on things like how to use an inhaler.

An audit is taking place, but it is expected the scheme will result in a reduction in medication errors. While errors are not common in the GHA, the team is committed to reducing the chance of error even further.

The pharmacy team has welcomed the ward visits as this allows them to utilise their skills more fully.

Shiraz said: "Wards are where patients are, so that's where we can be the most useful."

"We're getting great feedback from nurses and prescribers. Patients seem to appreciate it too. Sometimes they just want to talk to someone to get a better understanding of their medication and how they should take it."

To start with the rota covers John Ward, Dudley Toomey, Captain Murchison and the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). However longer term the team would like to extend the service to other wards and other sites.



Supporting clinical excellence through IT

New systems set up by the IM&T Department are helping clinical staff to do their jobs as effectively as possible.

The bed management system set up earlier this year collects data from the moment a patient is admitted into a ward until discharged. This also includes transfers to other wards and even bed movement within wards.

The system supports handovers by including handover notes, treatment plans and highlighting patients needing extra support. All of this information helps nurses have more accurate and swift handovers and helps clinical staff in their decision making.

Ernest Gilbert from IM&T said: "I find it very self-satisfying that I am carrying out my job and at the same time helping improve the working environment of colleagues and hopefully, in turn, having a positive impact on patients themselves."



Gibraltar Calling

GHA staff had a crucial role in keeping music lovers safe and well at Gibraltar Calling this month.

As well as playing a vital part of the event at the Europa Point event, staff were delighted to get backstage meetings with the stars including Enrique Iglesias and Gary Barlow.

Supporting bereaved parents

In July 40 people attended a seminar on infant loss and bereavement, including paediatricians, midwives, health visitors and stenographers.

During the seminar professionals looked at new care pathways, and how to make care more consistent for families who experience infant loss.

Liaison Midwife Naomi Gross said: "Many people haven't been through it themselves, so they don't really understand what families are going through, and don't know what to say. The seminar helped people understand some of the issues and helped them to handle things more sensitively."

Baby Loss Awareness Week is being held 9 to 15 October to highlight how common infant loss is, encourage people to talk about baby loss more and commemorate the lives of babies who died during pregnancy, at or soon after birth, and in infancy. The charity Babystepps will be holding a candlelight vigil in Westview promenade for the Wave of Light event and sharing the stories of families who have experienced infant loss.



Bringing more kindness to care

Compassion is nothing new in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), where every day staff help patients and their families at the most difficult time of their lives. However in the last year, the team has been working to bring even more compassion to their care through the Humanisation Project.

The aim of the project is to bring more human kindness to care, by seeing each patient as a person with individual needs that need supporting – needs beyond clinical care, but just as important to that person and their recovery. The team wanted to see humanisation at the heart of their work.

Humanisation embraces the importance of family. So one of the first things the team did was introduce a 24-hour open door policy for families and carers.

Staff recognise that the simple sight of a sunset or the sea can make a huge difference to how a person feels, and build it into their care plan. Healing walks also play an important role in recovery when patients are able.

Nursing staff are also using their musical talents to help patients, performing cello recitals on the unit.

Staff have taken advanced communications training, to help them have the vital conversations with patients or their families, so they can truly personalise the care they offer. An information app has also been introduced to help relatives, carers and friends.

While patients are in the unit, staff complete diaries for them, so that later on patients can look back and understand what has happened to them while they were in a critical condition. When patients have recovered, the team also invites people to follow up clinics alongside their families so they can talk through their experience and see the unit – helping them to come to terms with a traumatic part of their life.

Everyone from the clinical team through to the unit's cleaner is signed up to the project and playing a part to bring more compassion to care.

Although only running since April 2018, the project is already receiving excellent feedback from patients and their families.

How you can help me

Working together is one of the GHA's core values, and there are lots of ways you can do this within your team, with colleagues and with patients. Sometimes there might be a simple thing you can do that would make a big difference, but you might not know about it. This month we'll be looking at a simple way you can help the domestic team – by avoiding wet floors!

Every day the domestic team mop floors all around the GHA, helping keep patients safe from infection and ensuring facilities look their best. Did you know that if you walk across that wet floor before its had time to dry, you'll leave marks and the domestics will need to mop again?

Consider whether you can wait a few minutes before walking through. Sometimes it will be unavoidable, but if so, even a simple "sorry" can help make domestic staff feel their work is appreciated. Let's all do our bit to help each other!

Is there a simple thing colleagues can do to make your work easier? Let us know at lea.fountain@gha.gi

