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Welcome to the first Epwords for 2017. This edition highlights a small collection of the many great stories from across our organisation — celebrating patient outcomes; showcasing staff education and development; and presenting some of the latest advances in healthcare. Also profiled is Epworth’s community involvement via some incredible fundraising activities.

It’s been a busy few months as I’ve settled into my new role as Group Chief Executive at Epworth. I’ve now had the chance to visit all of Epworth’s sites and it’s been great to meet and get to know many of our staff and doctors. I’ve been really impressed by the dedication of our staff and the pride they display in caring for our patients and the community.

As a leading private healthcare provider, Epworth continually looks for ways to improve its clinical services. In this context, the Epworth Board and Executive team is in the process of renewing our strategic goals and priorities beginning with a workshop in late March — more in the next edition of Epwords.

Finally, I’d like to sincerely thank everyone at Epworth for the warm welcome I have received since starting in January. I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Regards,

Dr Lachlan Henderson
Group Chief Executive
Patients’ dreams realised by 3D print technology

The dream of print-to-order medical devices is well and truly a reality at Epworth Freemasons, where six patients have now been fitted with 3D printed jaw parts that include teeth.

The new technology has enabled patients to leave surgery with three or more new teeth fitted to the 3D jaw part, which is designed and printed to their personal specifications.

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon Dr George Dimitroulis reports that all patients had long-term conditions or injury that resulted in loss of teeth and subsequent erosion of the jawbone.

One patient, Suzie (pictured above in surgery), had a nasty motor vehicle accident in 1989 and lost a large part of her top jaw together with numerous teeth. She underwent complex bone graft reconstructive surgery ten years ago, but this failed at the end of last year. She was wearing a cumbersome denture before her operation on 14 March.

Three days after the surgery, she reported feeling very well, and experiencing little pain. She was taking care with rinsing her mouth, but otherwise able to clean her own teeth on the other side of her mouth.

“This new procedure sets the teeth in place, fixed to the titanium 3D printed device, in an operation that takes approximately one hour,” says George.

“This cannot be compared with the process of having to wait months for bone grafts that strengthen the jaw to enable the insertion of new teeth, as is currently the case with dental implants.”

Called the Osseoframe, the new device was conceived, developed and manufactured in Australia by George and a team of designers, engineers and prosthodontists.

George founded the small Melbourne startup company, OMX Solutions, which makes the Osseoframe. He reports that his ideas for 3D devices would have gone overseas had it not been for the support of Epworth Freemasons and financial assistance from the federal government for which he is grateful.
Painting a bright future through depression

When Marnie Higgs sought help for her anxiety and depression at Epworth Clinic, she never expected to tap into a well of undiscovered creativity in the process. But it was during her time as an inpatient receiving treatment that she felt compelled to pick up a paintbrush — resulting in a newfound love for creating meaningful art that Marnie has since shared with others.

Developing postnatal depression with the birth of her second son, and then facing the news of the same son’s diagnosis of kidney cancer when he was just a year old, Marnie struggled with severe depression and anxiety for years, trying various forms of treatment on and off, including medication.

As part of her program, Marnie received treatment daily as an inpatient over a course of 20 days, returning after a one-week break for a further course of treatment. During this time, Marnie found herself searching for a way to pass the time outside of her TMS program and quieten her often-busy mind. It was then she decided to focus her efforts on creating art.

“At night after an early dinner I would still be wide awake and thinking, so I asked the nurses if I could use the group room,” says Marnie. Joined by others who took up their own hobbies each night, Marnie began to paint.

“The painting came quite naturally. In a way, it’s the real therapy. I can let emotions out and communicate things I may not be able to talk about,” she says.

As Marnie’s passion for painting grew, she channelled her emotions into themes which then became a distinct series of works. And with the encouragement of friends and family, she’s now printed and sold copies of her art — something that has given Marnie a deep sense of accomplishment and worth.

“It has made me feel that what I am doing has meant something to others and could touch other people in a significant way. It’s made me feel on top of the world and that I am doing something truly creative and worthwhile,” says Marnie.

“Ever since I started treatment at Epworth, I now have the bravery to put paintbrush to paper. My perfectionist traits take a back seat to my desire to let go,” she says. “Receiving TMS along with a few changes to my medication and the painting have come together to form a beautiful change in my condition.”

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Learn more about Marnie’s story and see her artwork on her website, marniehiggs.com.
Epworth Geelong’s first baby is on its way!

Within days of announcing the highly anticipated service to the region’s GPs, Epworth received its first maternity booking, with the hospital’s first baby due in November this year.

Epworth Geelong has welcomed four new obstetricians who will see their first patients from late April, at approximately ten weeks gestation.

Geelong Maternity Group, comprising Dr James Swan, Dr Michael Shembrey, Dr Jodie Benson and Dr Emily Huning, will be located in Suite 3.3, on the same floor as the maternity unit.

In February, two new NUMs and midwives joined the hospital to manage prenatal and postnatal maternity services. Gabby Ryan will look after the antenatal period and birthing suite and Camille Gordon will be responsible for the special care nursery and maternity ward.

“I am really excited to be part of the maternity unit at Epworth Geelong and can’t wait to welcome the first mothers and babies to Level 3!” Gabby says.

Together with Lisa Garner, Associate Director of Clinical Services — Maternity, Gabby and Camille will lead the recruitment phase and final setup of maternity services.

“We’ve been given a rare opportunity to develop maternity services from the beginning and really think about the level of service we can provide — what we can do to go above and beyond for mums,” says Camille.

Mums-to-be can expect a first class service, with private rooms and ensuite for all patients, room service meals available to order and diagnostic and imaging services under the one roof.

The first maternity tours commenced on 15 March, with tours held every Wednesday at 6pm and Sunday at 4pm.

More information about Epworth Geelong maternity is available online at epworthgeelong.org.au/ourservices/maternity or contact the team on 03 5271 8322.
For many years now, Epworth orthopaedic surgeon Mr Andrew Beischer has participated in clinical training of surgeons from overseas. Visiting Fellows are regularly sponsored by Australian doctors and health services so they will share the new skills they learn amongst the health populations of their own countries.

In his role as a Board member of the Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA), Andrew developed a relationship with the Hospital for Traumatology and Orthopaedics (HTO) in Ho Chi Minh City. HTO is the busiest orthopaedic hospital in Vietnam and Andrew was keen to establish a program that sponsored young orthopaedic surgeons to visit Melbourne to learn current surgical techniques, while also experiencing something of life in Australia during their three-month stay. Epworth joined the ‘Project HTO’ partnership and since its inception in January 2015, 12 orthopaedic surgeons have been through the program.

Another initiative that was identified as a priority under Project HTO was the introduction of an English learning program for 2017, alongside the plan to reinvigorate and restock the hospital library in Ho Chi Minh. Recognising its limited resources and decades-old textbooks and journals, Andrew suggested the provision of an air-conditioner, up-to-date supply of medical literature and online access to medical journals.

It was an idea warmly embraced by everybody he told. Two friends immediately donated $10,000 through Norman Beischer Medical Research Foundation, established by Andrew’s beloved father, an Emeritus Professor who died just over two years ago after a lifetime vocation in obstetrics and gynaecology.

“The Epworth Medical Foundation then offered to meet that amount to supply new textbooks which will stay in the library. To enable staff to borrow books, I am encouraging my AOA colleagues to clean out their shelves and we’ll find a way to ship them over,” says Andrew.

“We also received an enthusiastic response from Epworth Richmond Executive and Library Manager Susie Moreton, who met and welcomed the visitors from HTO in February.

“The new Epworth/HTO Friendship Library will be completed in early 2018. I liked the idea of what we can achieve through friendship and the name reminds me of the Friendship Bridge that the Australian government built over the Mekong River. Work will start there in May.

“When the doctors come to Melbourne, they come to the beach with us, go to the footy, sing in St Ignatius church with the Vietnamese community and truly experience life and work in Australia. They are our friends and we have already forged lasting and generous relationships across several Melbourne hospital groups and with individual doctors.”

Nothing seems to hold back the systematic plans that Andrew has to share surgery techniques and equipment enjoyed in privileged, developed countries. The library is one of four initiatives planned for this year under Project HTO. Apart from his father as mentor, Andrew admires the Fred Hollows approach to improving another community’s health.

“Just get in there and do it,” he says.
This wolf in sheep’s clothing can’t hide anymore

Bladder cancer is the ninth most common cancer in the world and is considered easily treatable when detected early. Unfortunately, diagnosing bladder cancer can be less straightforward.

“One challenge is that some bladder tumours may be difficult to see, especially if there is more than one tumour,” explains Mr Paul Anderson, urologist at Epworth Richmond. “Cystoscopy is the main diagnostic tool for bladder cancer, which is a surgical procedure that involves inserting a thin tube with a light and a camera into the bladder, allowing the surgeon to ‘see’ inside the bladder. But this is a difficult task and the doctor may see some tumours but miss others.”

A new diagnostic dye is addressing this issue by providing a higher degree of accuracy in the diagnosis and treatment of bladder cancer. Hexvix is a dye that penetrates cancer cells more quickly than healthy cells, providing a three-hour window where the cancer cells look bright pink when illuminated with an ultraviolet light, allowing them to be clearly identifiable.

Paul was one of the first doctors in Australia to carry out the procedure, which he does at the Royal Melbourne Hospital and at Epworth Richmond.

“This technology — called ‘blue light cystoscopy’ — has been around for some time overseas, and is standard procedure for bladder cancer diagnosis in countries such as Germany and in Scandinavia. I had the opportunity to use this technology overseas and felt that we ought to bring this best practice to Australia,” says Paul.

Initially, Paul received a special prescriber status licence to trial the dye in Australia, while pursuing Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approval for use, which has recently been granted.

“With this dye, what would otherwise be invisible to the eye shines brightly pink, allowing for a much higher degree of accuracy in the diagnosis and staging of the tumour. We can then target our treatment much more specifically to the cancer, so we don’t over-treat or under-treat the patient,” he says.

“The benefit for the patient, as shown in overseas trials, is that by using this technology and correctly identifying and treating the cancer, the level of recurrence drops, which in turn means a reduction in the frequency of the patient needing to revisit theatre. While the dye is expensive, overseas data shows that it is cost effective by reducing the frequency the patient needs to go back to theatre for a cystoscopy.”

As a champion of bladder health, Paul’s goal is to raise awareness of this disease.

“Most people, including some doctors, are not familiar with bladder cancer,” he says. “This means the disease can go undiagnosed for a long time, particularly in women where the symptoms can be confused with urinary tract infections or gynecological issues. By getting the word out, I hope we can increase awareness and make sure people are diagnosed correctly and early.”

Left: tumour with normal cystoscopy; right: tumour vision with ultraviolet cystoscopy using Hexvix dye. All images including above courtesy of Photocure ASA
How are you finding the position so far?
It has been an exciting and challenging start. I have had to transition my clinical practice whilst working hard to try and get a number of research studies up and running as quickly as possible. I have been excited by the openness to research and new ideas at Epworth and the programs in place to facilitate this.

What do you hope to achieve in this role?
I hope to establish a really unique clinical research program embedded within the clinical services provided at Epworth. My main interest is in the development of new treatments for disorders such as depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] and dementia, especially using novel brain stimulation treatments. The intent is to develop a research program developing and testing new treatments with this program closely linked to clinical service provision.

What does the establishment of the Epworth Mental Health Education and Research Unit mean for Epworth?
The intention really is to grow our program to become the leading mental health research unit in the private psychiatry space within the country and equivalent to some of the leading private hospital-based research groups internationally. This will hopefully be an attraction to draw the best mental health staff to Epworth, ensure we are at the leading edge of service provision and obviously provide the best possible treatments to our patients.

Can you share any exciting developments in the mental health research field or areas that are of a particular interest to you?
One of the major challenges in treating most mental health disorders is that the current medication and psychological treatments that we have available are only effective for a sub-population of patients. Fortunately we are in an exciting time when a number of new therapeutic modalities, especially those involving what we call non-invasive brain stimulation, are being developed as alternative options for these patients. Transcranial magnetic stimulation, a safe and well tolerated treatment for depression, is already being used widely in clinical practice and there is now a highly promising range of other treatments in development.

How can research benefit our mental health patients?
At the most direct level, it can give patients access to developing treatments that can have a profound impact on their symptoms and functioning. By far the most satisfying part of my role is seeing patients achieve dramatic and life-changing benefits when treated as part of innovative research protocols. On another level, it can provide critical hope to patients: the sense that something is in the pipeline for the future, especially for patients struggling with illness not responding to established treatments.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?
Spending as much time as possible with my family, travelling, coaching junior football (soccer) and skiing.

Friends of Epworth Race Day: a great day out
Staff, family and friends are invited to attend this year’s Friends of Epworth Race Day on Saturday 17 June from 12 noon at Moonee Valley Racing Club.
The day includes a three-course lunch and beverages in the Champions Room overlooking the course and a fabulous afternoon of racing.
Master of Ceremonies is jockey Casey Bruce and special guest is Adelaide-based former champion jockey Scott Leckey who was injured at a race meeting in the Northern Territory in 2007 and received rehabilitation at Epworth. Dress for the day is lounge suit with prizes being awarded for Fashions on the Field.
Tickets are available at $165 each with seating in tables of six, eight or ten. To reserve your tickets contact Kathryn Johnston in the Epworth Medical Foundation on 03 9426 6359.
Knowing what’s ahead aids road to recovery

Making the transition from major surgery to rehabilitation can be a challenging process. What can make a difference? Preparation.

Libby Tudball can vouch for that. She underwent a total hip replacement at Epworth in January this year, followed by ten days of rehabilitation at Epworth Brighton. Before Libby had her operation and began rehabilitation she took part in the Orthopaedic Pre-admission Education Program, designed to give patients a thorough run-through of what to expect from surgery and how to prepare for the next stage of their recovery in rehabilitation.

“Knowing what's ahead aids road to recovery.”

Helping further acclimatise Libby was the fact that she’s no stranger to Epworth Brighton.

“I know Epworth Brighton very well because many members of my family have been there — my mother, my father, my father-in-law, my sister,” says Libby. “I’ve seen the place so many times, but this is my first time as a patient.”

As a teacher educator at Monash University, Libby was particularly impressed with the sessions and presentations the occupational therapists ran at Epworth Brighton.

“I’m used to teaching people how to present and I think the OTs did a great job, getting us all to think about our own situations and reminding us that each person is an individual,” says Libby. “They’re so skilled at handling different age groups and different needs, and they taught us all to pace ourselves while we’re in rehabilitation as well as when we go home.”

“You’re challenged in physio, but the physio is fantastic,” Libby adds. “They’re so experienced with postoperative recovery that they know what you’re capable of at various stages of your recovery.”

Libby says her surgeon, Professor Richard de Steiger, expects she’ll most likely need the other hip replaced in a couple of years, but after this experience is not too fazed by the prospect.

“I certainly wouldn’t fear it; I’d just think, ok, this is just a process that you have to go through,” says Libby. “Professor de Steiger was wonderful and all the staff were just fantastic. I cannot speak highly enough of the program from go to whoa.”

Libby says it was an invaluable experience that left her feeling ready to face what was ahead.

“It was absolutely fabulous to go to a workshop before the operation to meet with occupational therapists, physiotherapists and nurses, and to be completely prepared before I even went into the operation.”

“Learning so much about what to expect and having access to resources was great. I went home with my crutches all fitted, I’d learnt how to walk with them, I had my toe wiper, I had my pickup stick and I had plenty of brochures to read,” she says.
Nutrition course offers food for thought

At Epworth, we believe that giving staff the tools to expand on their knowledge and skills ultimately leads to an improved service offering and — importantly — a better patient experience.

For 2017, a total of 124 scholarships have been awarded to staff across all divisions covering a range of projects. All scholarships are made possible through the generosity of private donors and corporate sponsors of the Epworth Medical Foundation.

Epworth Eastern Food Services staff Samantha Bloomfield (food services associate), Briony Lemmer (menu monitor) and Hanson Prakasia (head chef) were awarded a 2016 scholarship to complete an online Certificate of Nutrition & Diet with Beck Health.

The course covered a range of areas including general nutrition, specific diets, food intolerances, digestion and chemical reactions. Sam, Briony and Hanson learnt about these through case studies relevant to the healthcare industry and the key role food services staff play in supporting our patients. In addition the online course offered message board forums where students were able to connect with each other.

As the head chef at Epworth Eastern, understanding nutrition is a crucial component of Hanson’s role. He says the course helped him to understand different aspects of nutrition, enabling him to better plan meals for patients with additional requirements.

“The course was delivered in a format that makes it easy to learn,” says Hanson. “It’s been a great way to upskill and gain more knowledge to challenge myself and progress my career.”

Sam says the course has provided her with a wealth of information in regards to how organs function and why some people digest foods differently. “It’s given me an increased understanding of a range of factors that impact on nutritional advice and I’m more confident in having conversations with patients and making menu suggestions to aid in their recovery,” she says.

Briony started working in hospitality over 20 years ago and says the course has been invaluable in giving her greater skills and confidence in supporting patients with specific nutritional needs that have evolved over time, especially with the increased prevalence of food allergies and intolerances.

The team agrees that the scholarship has been a great way for them to further their learning and they encourage other staff to undertake study in their area of interest through the support of the scholarship program.

For queries regarding the Epworth Scholarship Program please phone 03 9936 8289, email scholarships@epworth.org.au.

Get ready to tango!

This year’s Epworth Gala Ball is titled Epworth Tango so no doubt guests will be strutting their stuff on the dancefloor.

The event will be held on Saturday 5 August 2017 from 6.15pm in the Palladium ballroom at Crown. Dress for the evening is black tie with a touch of lace. Attendees will be treated to an evening of great entertainment including fine dining and flamenco dance. There will also be some fabulous prizes up for auction with all proceeds directed towards innovative projects at Epworth.

Tickets are available at $295 each or $2900 a table of ten. To book please contact Kathryn Johnston in the Epworth Medical Foundation on 03 9426 6359.
A harpist with a heart for healing

When Christine Middleton spent time at her dying mother’s bedside, playing her harp was a way to provide her mother some comfort in her final days.

“Visiting her in the hospital each night after work with my harp, I noticed, as I played, that her levels of agitation decreased and her breathing became slower and deeper,” says Christine. “I could see that the music was making a real difference to her by providing a high level of comfort and solace during her transition to death.”

The nurses at Epworth Richmond, where Christine’s mother was a patient, agreed, and at the request of other patients as well as staff, the door to her room would be left ajar so that Christine’s music could make its way around the ward. This was, says Christine, a significant turning point in her life.

“It was then that I recognised the healing power of live music.

“Three years ago, the pastoral care team, recognising the value of therapeutic harp for patients, staff and families, approached the Epworth Medical Foundation and I began working as a funded therapeutic harpist at Epworth Richmond. In November 2016, the Epworth Medical Foundation increased the funding for me to work at Epworth Freemasons as well. I now travel two days per week from the Bellarine Peninsula to Melbourne on the new Port Phillip Ferry.”

On this day, as Christine begins her regular session in the foyer of Epworth Freemasons Clarendon Street, visitors heading to reception stop and smile as they are greeted by the melodious tones of the harp. The gentle notes make the perfect background soundscape, non-disruptive but present enough to elicit feelings of calm. That’s something Christine knows makes a genuine difference to a patient or visiting family member’s experience in hospital.

“Regardless of the areas I visit in the hospital, people are generally feeling fatigue and anxiety and are often needing deep rest,” she says. “I know that the gentle and soothing harp music I offer provides time for reflection, refreshment and renewal for everyone, so this work gives me great satisfaction. It is an honour for me to be present and let the harp be my voice of comfort to others during some of the most difficult moments of their lives.”

Learn more about Christine and her therapeutic music at christinemiddleton.com.au.
Australian clinical training program brings Mongolian doctors to Epworth

For both surgical practice and fundraising efforts, Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Dr Samantha Hargreaves has been visiting Africa and Mongolia for many years to help improve obstetric and gynaecological treatment there.

This year, in a collaborative partnership with her Royal Women’s colleagues who initiated the clinical assistance program in Mongolia several years ago, Sam has garnered financial sponsorship from Epworth Medical Foundation (EMF) to pay for two Mongolian doctors to come to Australia for practical medical and clinical experience.

Dr Unurjargal Davaajav (Dr Unur), head of gynaecology at Maternity 1 hospital in Mongolia, and Dr Munkh-Od Zorigt (Dr Oggie) have arrived in Melbourne as guests of Epworth and are taking part in a specially designed and intensive program. The doctors are working alongside specialists at several Melbourne health institutions — including Epworth (Epworth Freemasons, Epworth Richmond and Epworth Eastern); the Royal Women’s; the Mercy hospital for Women; WUME; the Jean Hailes Clinic; and with IVF experts at Melbourne IVF and are attending multidisciplinary meetings and conferences.

“Both doctors are very excited to be given this opportunity to experience our health system and see the treatments we are able to offer women in Australia. I am hoping they will learn on a practical, clinical and operational level,” says Sam.

This is Dr Unur’s second visit to Australia, after she came to participate in a conference six years ago. She has so far found the program incredibly educational.

“Mongolia is a developing country and as a public hospital we have very limited resources,” adds Dr Unur. “We would like to do lots of things but it’s hard to get everything, though we will try our best. In Australia you are using a lot of new technology and new instruments, and your doctors are educated to a very high level. We are doing the same procedures in Mongolia but with different facilities.

“I would like to thank Epworth for this program because I’ve met a lot of doctors who are learning the differences between healthcare in Mongolia and Australia and this will be very useful for developing the relationship between the two countries.”

Sam says that the push to improve women’s health in Mongolia was begun by Dr Kym Jansen from The Women’s. She was joined by Dr Emma Readman from Mercy Health and over the years by Dr Elizabeth Farrell, as well as a team of anaesthetists and perioperative nurses, and a tradition was born. Approximately eight years ago, Kym performed the very first gynaecological laparoscopy in Mongolia, and last year the team watched their Mongolian colleagues perform a number of complex cases themselves.

Sam acknowledges the generosity of EMF in contributing to this program.

“I am very grateful to EMF and thankful I went hiking in Japan with them to raise funds for radiation oncology. It was a marvellous trip where I discovered firsthand the ways they are distributing the funds they raise to improve healthcare not just at Epworth, but for everyone. I have since discovered more about all the work they are doing and the ways they help Epworth doctors make such a difference — and in my case, to women’s health on a global level!”

Dr Oggie, Dr Sam Hargreaves, Epworth Freemasons Executive Director David Nowell and Dr Unur at a gala fundraiser dinner on 15 March.
Epworth Geelong’s pink angel

It was a fun-filled day at the races for 25 Epworth Geelong staff who made their way to Geelong Racecourse on Sunday 29 January, in support of patient services colleague Wendy Boddington.

For two years, Wendy has coordinated the Pink Angels Race Day to raise money for the McGrath Foundation. This year, more than 200 people attended, including Tracey Bevan from the foundation, all helping to raise over $13,000.

Jockey Chelsea Hall and her horse Sullivan’s Paddock were the only entrants in the Pink Angels-named race to wear the pink silks and rug donated by Highlands for all riders, and they won!

Diagnosed with breast cancer in June of 2015, Wendy’s drive to support the McGrath Foundation started after a meeting with her breast care nurse early on in her diagnosis, when she wanted to see a prosthetics kit while discussing a mastectomy and was told there were none available due to an insufficient budget.

“At just over $300 a piece, I couldn’t believe they didn’t have the vital resources needed to support patients. So I decided to do something about it,” Wendy says.

As Wendy already had a background in racing, a sponsored event at Geelong Racecourse was a no-brainer, but the first event would prove challenging: Wendy had started her second course of chemotherapy only a week before the big day.

The inaugural event was nonetheless a standout success and, after a follow-up event this year, Wendy says the increased awareness in the McGrath foundation has been unbelievable and worth all the stress.

“Most people think the McGrath Foundation simply focuses on research, but most of their money goes towards funding breast care nurses,” says Wendy. “I am so glad I could make a difference in the care these nurses have been able to provide.”

Today, Wendy is cancer free and strives to continue the Pink Angels journey.

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT: EPWORTH MAKES HEADLINES

We make headlines across the media for advancements in technology, medical firsts and our ability to change patients’ lives.

► THE AGE, 16 FEBRUARY

_The Age’s_ Julia Medew looks at a recent study by The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) that finds that up to 66% of breast cancer patients kept at least 50% of their hair.

Julia interviews Kathy Bell, a breast cancer patient receiving treatment at Epworth, who volunteered to try the scalp-cooling caps during her chemotherapy sessions. Kathy reported that although the cap added to her treatment time and the ice-cold temperature was uncomfortable, she was grateful to find she kept almost all her hair and experienced no side effects. Kathy says she’d like to see the caps offered more widely, including in the public hospital system.
Meet ... Joyce Coyle, ADCS Maternity and Women’s Health, Epworth Freemasons

Joyce started her role with Epworth on 16 January this year. Originally from the west coast of Scotland, Joyce has lived in Australia for 20 years this August and says she loves the healthcare opportunities she’s been presented with since moving here.

Please outline the key duties of your role.
As assistant director clinical services (ADCS) I support the nurse unit managers in maternity and woman’s health in their roles, ensuring best practice and quality improvement are adhered to.

What drew you to work at Epworth?
Epworth is a values-driven organisation. It’s very important to me that we look after each other and do the right thing right and that’s something I see is prominent at Epworth.

What do you hope to achieve in your position?
My main aim is to improve staff, patient and doctor satisfaction. I want to create a workplace where staff love coming to work, where patients and their families feel safe and supported at all times and where our doctors are engaged and committed.

What makes work meaningful to you?
I find work meaningful when we are improving what we do. It’s important that we constantly review and consider how we can make a difference in all facets of work.

What are some of your interests outside of work?
I love to keep fit so I exercise three or four times a week. I love the challenge of a round of golf! I also enjoy eating out with family and friends on a day in out in Melbourne — this is a great city!

Men’s Health Lunch to focus on diagnosis and treatment of stroke

Stroke is the third most common cause of death in Australia. In fact, about 40,000 Australians suffer from stroke annually — and of those cases, 73% experience stroke for the first time.

This year’s Men’s Health Lunch will focus on the advances in the diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of stroke patients.

Hosted by Epworth’s Group Chief Executive, Dr Lachlan Henderson, together with Master of Ceremonies Sports Physician Dr Peter Larkins, the event features guest speakers including Neurologist Dr Katya Kotschet, Neurosurgeon Mr Ian Wang and Rehabilitation Physician Dr Stephen de Graaf.

The educational lunch forum will be held on Thursday 11 May from 12.00 noon in the Members Dining Room of the MCG. All are welcome to attend with tickets available at $200 per person or $1900 a table of ten.

The Epworth Medical Foundation holds annual men’s and women’s health lunches to engage and inform its community on the health risks affecting them today and how to make wise lifestyle choices. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

For further information contact Kathryn Johnston on kathryn.johnston@epworth.org.au or phone 03 9426 6359.
The Epworth Medical Foundation has launched its challenges for the next 18 months. Every Epworth Medical Foundation Charity Challenge is an adventure in travel, friendship, taste, exploration, discovery, fitness and kindness.

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO TODAY?
We invite you to take part in an exciting, once-in-a-lifetime challenge to raise funds for patients at Epworth.

Discover extraordinary cultural wonders in off-the-beaten-path destinations. Explore bustling markets and remote villages, and savour delicious traditional meals. Forge new friendships, and push yourself beyond your everyday limits.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF to the adventure of a lifetime

EPWORTH CAMINO
Dates: 12–23 October 2017 or 26 September to 7 October 2018
Cost: $7690 (includes $2500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Patients at Epworth

The last six days of the Camino de Santiago offers the chance for time-starved travellers to walk the final 115kms into Santiago and gain a wonderful appreciation of the historic significance of the route. Walking through mixed landscapes in the company of your guide and group, there are numerous reminders of past pilgrims who travelled the route including crosses, statues and grain silos. The history of the trail will be shared with you to ensure that you soak in as much as you can during your short time on the trail. One of the many highlights is reaching the gates of Galicia leading to the fabled Santiago de Compostela with its famous cathedral and the tomb site of St James.

NEPAL POON HILL TREK
Dates: 13–26 October 2017
Cost: $6440 (includes $2500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Cancer patients at Epworth

This trek encompasses all the highlights you would expect from a trek in the Annapurna range. Making our way to Poon Hill we are rewarded with the stunning panorama of the Annapurnas at sunrise. From here we depart the main trail to complete a more remote traverse above the Annapurna Circuit, all the while accompanied by stunning mountain views as we make our way to Nayapul and the end of a very memorable trek in the Himalaya.
EPWORTH CHARITY CHALLENGES

EPWORTH FREEMASONS ANNAPURNA TREK
Dates: 11–21 November 2017
Cost: $6290 (includes $2500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Patients at Epworth Freemasons

Beginning in the foothills we trek through delightful villages and rural landscapes where we take in the local way of life. Making our way to Tadapani we will enjoy an outstanding view of the Annapurnas at sunrise. We then traverse to Ghandruk, witnessing stunning mountain scenery along our route to Nayapul.

MYANMAR CYCLE
Dates: 2–13 February 2018
Cost: $6880 (includes $2500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Cardiac patients at Epworth

We explore at handlebar level this friendly land, where exceptional hospitality is guaranteed. After flying to Mandalay, our cycling adventure starts in earnest with a ride on the outskirts before returning by boat on the Irrawaddy River. Our cycling continues through timeless villages where we observe traditional lifestyles on route to Bagan, home to one of the finest collection of temples in South East Asia. Exploring at a gentle pace, this magnificent region uncovers ancient pagodas and temples of a bygone era with intricate carvings, murals and astonishing architecture. At sacred Mount Popa, the abode of ‘Nats’, known as ‘Spirits of Ancient Ancestors’ we leave our bikes and climb the 700 steps for stunning panoramic views from the golden temple at its summit.

SOUTHERN CHINA CYCLE
Dates: 17 February to 1 March 2018
Cost: $6190 (includes $2500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Cardiac patients at Epworth

On this exquisite short cycling tour we explore southern China, as the locals do, by bike. We cycle the scenic backroads, amongst lush rice paddies shaded by limestone pinnacles. The pace of our cycling is relaxed with ample time to stop in villages or take advantage of the photographic opportunities. A minibus accompanies us to carry our gear and provides a welcome break when you have had enough cycling for the day.

LARAPINTA TREK
Dates: 27–29 April 2018
Cost: $3350 (includes $1500 in fundraising)
Beneficiaries: Patients at Epworth

The Larapinta Trail is one of the finest walks in Australia. Walking the high ridgelines of the West MacDonnell Ranges we gain a rare perspective of vast flood plains, the razorback rocky outcrops and sheer scale of this ancient land. We follow an itinerary that will appeal to the active walker. You will need to carry only a light pack as a support vehicle will meet us at our campsites with bush tucker that will exceed expectations. There will also be plenty of time to reflect on the variety of walking from trails that descend from the ridgeline into narrow canyons where sheltered pockets of delicate fern and twisted gum trees grow from the dry rivers of sand.

HOW IT WORKS
Each Epworth Charity Challenge is hosted by the Epworth Medical Foundation, and all funds raised are used to support patients at Epworth by funding important services, new equipment and facility upgrades.

There is a minimum fundraising target to participate in an Epworth Charity Challenge which will cover the cost of your adventure and ensure that funds are raised for our patients.

However, you are always welcome to contribute more than the minimum, and can rest assured that all funds will directly help patients.

If you decide to go down the fundraising or sponsorship paths, Epworth Medical Foundation will help you with a number of resources and ideas to make sure that this is easy and stress-free.

To get involved or seek more information, simply visit emf.org.au, email emfevents@epworth.org.au or call our friendly staff on 03 9426 6359.
Embracing the unforgettable sounds, smells and sights of India

Epworth’s Clare Daly accepted the challenge and joined the HeartSmart Rajasthan and Varanasi Cycle this past February, an Epworth Medical Foundation Charity Challenge to raise funds for cardiac patients at Epworth. Here, she takes us on a sensory adventure as she recalls her remarkable journey in India.

The beginning of February was filled with nerves, excitement and a new stamp in my passport as I boarded the plane to India. As we landed, our dreary-eyed group of 21 began an experience never to be forgotten. To sum up our travels through Rajasthan in a few lines is almost as difficult as negotiating your way through Jaipur on a bike.

India is an awakening of all senses. As we explored the Pink City of Jaipur we were eased into the true Indian culture. Walking down the street we were greeted with the never-ending sound of horns blaring, saris in every colour of the rainbow, and an unforgettable combination of monkeys in trees, cows roaming the street, and men attending to nature’s calling. Following this, we jumped on our bikes and began our journey to be remembered.

Day one of cycling produced a record number of flat tires, and, for some, multiple flat tires in the day. We were treated to a local guide in each new city, filled with knowledge that no guidebook could ever boast of. Our bellies were never left empty, with an abundant supply of traditional dishes and a never-ending supply of naan bread. Our trip highlights and lowlights ranged across the ten-day experience, with a conclusive group highlight being the Taj Mahal — words simply cannot do it justice.

From the youngest member (24) to the oldest (80) and everyone in between, we persevered through all challenges including but not limited to the 16-hour overnight train ride, upset stomachs and an inability to access cash for the majority of the trip. Despite the challenges, we managed to raise $60,000 for the Epworth Medical Foundation. Looking back, the highlights, the memories, the new friends … my Rajasthan experience will stay with me for a very long time. When asked, would I do it all again? In a heartbeat.

Clare Daly
Occupational Therapist, Epworth Rehabilitation

"Walking down the street we were greeted with the never-ending sound of horns blaring, saris in every colour of the rainbow, and an unforgettable combination of monkeys in trees, cows roaming the street, and men attending to nature’s calling”
Bringing the best of Epworth’s treatment home

For some patients that require ongoing medical care, Epworth’s Hospital in the Home Unit (HHU) provides an alternative to a hospital stay.

One such patient is Ian Moore, a 72-year-old who has been visited daily in his home for treatment by Epworth’s HHU team.

Ian contracted an infection in his spine after undergoing spinal surgery earlier this year.

“We were in Echuca when it happened,” explains Ian. “This was about five or six weeks ago. I couldn’t move — just about every nerve in my body was pinched and it stopped me from doing anything.”

Ian and his wife Susanne cut their holiday short and returned to Melbourne, heading straight to Epworth Richmond’s emergency department where Ian was seen by a specialist and admitted.

“That’s when they found the infection,” Ian continues. “The pain was unbelievable. I’m pretty tough but my god I had some tears — I couldn’t move, couldn’t walk.”

Ian spent ten days in hospital and was told that to receive treatment his hospital stay as an inpatient could be for up to six weeks, or he could sign up for HHU.

“I’d never heard of Hospital in the Home, but when the doctor suggested it, I thought, wow, we’ll go for that!” says Susanne. “I think it’s a tremendous idea. I mean, Epworth’s lovely and the nurses are great, but when they said we could have this service at home, it just made sense.”

HHU Acting Nurse Unit Manager Wendy Pattenden, who’s been with the service for eight years, says HHU patients speak highly of the care they receive.

“Patients like the one-on-one contact and personal care,” she says. “For the staff it’s lovely too, because you get to know the patients and their families well.”

The HHU service sees around 40-50 patients per month, within a 40km radius of Epworth Richmond. A staff of 12 nurses work seven days a week, 24 hours a day with an on-call service overnight. Not all patients qualify for the service and an extensive review is done by an HHU doctor and nurse to establish suitability.

“For Ian, though he’s restricted in terms of getting out and about, being seen at home allows him more freedom than he’d see in hospital.

“It’s better staying here and doing your own thing than sitting in a hospital ward or bed. At least I can go from one room to another — not that I can go very far,” Ian laughs. “It gives me more freedom and that makes a huge difference to my recovery.”
Learning to embrace the new normal

Often, what can help a difficult situation feel more bearable is knowing you’re not alone. Michelle O’Sullivan still meets regularly with the women she met while taking part in the Enhance breast cancer rehabilitation program run by Epworth. In fact, the women, who get together once a month, have even given their group a name: ‘The new normal’.

“That was the phrase that kept coming up again and again — life might not be what it used to be but now there’s the new normal,” explains Michelle.

Michelle took part in Enhance from April to June in 2016 after completing her chemotherapy treatment for breast cancer at Epworth Richmond. Her oncology coordinator suggested she join the eight-week program to learn how to rebuild her physical strength as well as meet a potential support network of women going through the same experience.

Specifically tailored for women facing physical limitations and emotional issues related to their treatment, the program involves an initial comprehensive physical and psychological assessment, as well as a weekly two-hour group session and one-to-one individual therapy as required.

Michelle says it didn’t take long before the women in her group became close and, with the encouragement and support of the therapists, sessions took on a more fluid approach.

“Our group started to almost run itself after a while. We would begin with one of the different specialists leading a conversation and then pretty quickly it would be ‘I brought this article this week, is anybody interested in seeing that’, and then somebody else would talk really openly the following week about something that was happening to them and want to explore that more. We were able to enjoy a little bit of self-direction about what we wanted and what we needed.”

Michelle says her cancer treatment had left her deconditioned, so found the physical therapy as part of the program massively beneficial.

“We’d go in for two hours a week and the first hour was spent discussing different health-related topics, while the second hour was dedicated to being in the gym. It was fantastic for us to see how much progress could be made with just one hour of exercise a week. I was amazed at how much better I felt doing that,” says Michelle. “I wasn’t even aware that I had a lack of balance until the exercise program helped me regain what I had lost. It was remarkable.”

It’s been a year since Michelle finished chemotherapy treatment and she says her health is progressing well.

“My recovery is ongoing, but coming ahead leaps and bounds,” she says. “I’ve lost all the ‘fogginess’ in terms of brain thinking and functioning, but I’m still surprised at how tired I am even after so long. Radiation takes a lot out of you.”

Michelle, who says she recommends the program “one hundred and twenty per cent!” has left a permanent reminder of her time in Enhance with the team.

“On the very first day you do an exercise where you pick a ‘strength’ card which talks about things that you are either hopeful for or positive about in relation to your experience,” Michelle explains. “It was a really good focus right from the get-go. But we all thought the cards looked a little like they were geared towards school children, so I made a new set of cards using my own photography for them to use with future groups.”

As for The new normal, their monthly catch-up continues to provide camaraderie and a confidence boost, alongside a genuine friendship that has clearly endured.

“It’s just so supportive and reinforcing,” says Michelle.
My father was admitted on 27 Jan this year and died on 30 Jan. He was admitted through the ED and looked after on the 4th floor on the Cato wing. I would like to offer my thanks to Dr Mya Cubitt in the ED and the staff on the ward (I recall Lucy and Lorenzo — but the others were equally as good). His care was excellent and my family were kept informed at all times. I am an emergency physician and my wife a nurse — so we are certainly well qualified to make this judgement! Thanks again Angelo

I recently spent two days at Eastern Epworth for the purpose of elective surgery to my foot. I was admitted to 5 South postoperatively and into the care of a young nurse named Natalie. I would like to offer my thanks to Dr Mya Cubitt in the ED and the staff on the ward (I recall Lucy and Lorenzo — but the others were equally as good). His care was excellent and my family were kept informed at all times. I am an emergency physician and my wife a nurse — so we are certainly well qualified to make this judgement! Thanks again Angelo

My name is Tania and my sister has been a patient. I would like to thank the staff that have been looking after Linda and offering support to my family. Linda was taken to CCU last week and we were advised that unfortunately there is nothing more that can be done for Linda except make her comfortable. As you can imagine this was absolutely devastating to all of her family and friends. The nursing staff in CCU and in the ward (4 grey) have been nothing short of amazing. The way they have cared for Linda, with the upmost care, compassion and dignity has been so heart-warming. I work in the emergency department at another hospital and Linda’s son is a paramedic and we have both been so grateful for the genuine compassion shown by all of your nursing staff. It has made a very difficult situation slightly easier as we know that Lin is being treated with the genuine love, kindness and compassion that she deserves. Please pass on our sincere thanks to all that have come into contact with Linda and her family. Nothing has been too much trouble and as I have said they have been amazing. Right down to the food services staff, pastoral care — Anna and Karen. Thank you all for your ongoing support.

Over that period my care was attended to primarily by Fiona, Kim, Steph, Helen, Dolly and a young student, I think her name was Marie. I am a former nurse/midwife and my husband is a midwife in full-time nursing employment.

I have, unfortunately, spent a great deal of time as a patient in many various hospitals due to a serious accident in which I sustained injuries that require complex ongoing care. In my professional life and my personal medical treatment I have not experienced a standard of care that is as good as that offered by the staff at Epworth.

I don’t know what the secret to your success is but there are many hospitals that could learn from your team. From the time of my admission to the theatre until my discharge from the ward the staff were exemplary in their professionalism and delivery of care but more importantly in their warmth and friendly manner. In naming individuals there is always the risk of leaving someone out and I hope I have not done that. Broadly speaking though, every staff member that I came in contact with in theatre, recovery, 5 North and 2 North including cleaning and kitchen staff, orderlies and paper delivery people were courteous, caring and friendly.

I will not hesitate in recommending Eastern Epworth to anyone and I hope that my observations and congratulations are made known to all of the staff who participated in my care during my stay on November 22nd and 23rd. Thank you so much for your attention.

Sincere regards and grateful thanks, ML

My name is Tania and my sister has been a patient. I would like to thank the staff that have been looking after Linda and offering support to my family. Linda was taken to CCU last week and we were advised that unfortunately there is nothing more that can be done for Linda except make her comfortable. As you can imagine this was absolutely devastating to all of her family and friends. The nursing staff in CCU and in the ward (4 grey) have been nothing short of amazing. The way they have cared for Linda, with the upmost care, compassion and dignity has been so heart-warming. I work in the emergency department at another hospital and Linda’s son is a paramedic and we have both been so grateful for the genuine compassion shown by all of your nursing staff. It has made a very difficult situation slightly easier as we know that Lin is being treated with the genuine love, kindness and compassion that she deserves. Please pass on our sincere thanks to all that have come into contact with Linda and her family. Nothing has been too much trouble and as I have said they have been amazing. Right down to the food services staff, pastoral care — Anna and Karen. Thank you all for your ongoing support.