

**Subject:**

FW: The Statewide BaSCI Project - September 2022 Update



## Message from the Chair

In these times when the clinical workforce is so challenged, and change seems to be the only constant, it is important to pause and reflect on the work we are doing and the interrelated benefits produced from our sometimes seemingly independent labours. I was thrilled to see the work being implemented at each of our partners sites presented at the 2022 Annual Statewide BaSCI Project Forum. This was only our second in-person event in the project owing to Covid-19 restrictions. As well as hearing from our own teams we invited peers from across the border into the program and initiated a partnership through conversation with the Clinical Networks for Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation and Spinal Cord Injury Services at the Agency for Clinical Innovation in New South Wales. The whole day was an exciting opportunity for all of us in the Statewide BaSCI Project to reconnect and share our successes and workshop our continuing challenges. The Statewide BaSCI Project is complex. Not only are we aiming to improve specialist brain injury rehabilitation and spinal cord injury services across the continuum from inpatient through transitional and community settings but we are striving for equity in the work we are doing in a state as vast and diverse as Queensland.

You may be aware that, as part of ongoing review and monitoring of all statewide services, the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service and Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service at Metro South Health have recently updated their Statewide Service Description documents and these are available on the SWS website. As part of the review process, the Statewide Services team have delivered a consultation piece to all Hospital

and Health Services (HHS) to seek feedback from referrers about the Service Description and current services provided. The feedback from HHSs will support the review of Statewide Services along with the newly designed annual reporting process that again includes a particular domain for equity. I hope that you had the opportunity to feedback through your local HHS process.

These processes are important for Queenslanders generally and to the Statewide BaSCI Project especially as we continue our improvement work with the aim of meeting the needs of patients regardless of where they live. To ensure alignment we have made changes to our Statewide Steering Committee by inviting Jennifer Pilcher from System Planning Branch onto the group. Jen arrives as some other key representatives change. I would like to thank both Jennifer Finch from the Allied Health Professional Office and Dr Kara Appadurai from Metro North for their time supporting the work. Jenny has retired and is replaced by Katelyn Clarke and Kana is on Professional Development leave and Dr Cassandra McLennan steps into that seat.

This month we received the first set of data submitted from sites to support our project deliverable on improved service measurability through the establishment of a set of key performance indicators. This is fantastic progress to improve transparency and corporate visibility in our service data and I need to thank Areti Kennedy, Michele Brunello and the whole working group for their efforts. This is work we have not attempted before and the new information should help us as a collective work through our challenges supported by data.

Another important milestone to celebrate in this edition is the recruitment of Project Officers in both Townsville and Gold Coast. Jennifer Quail and Jessica Dawber bring a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to these roles in our most northern and southern posts respectively. They round out the key Project Office portfolios in our five HHS implementation sites joining Leah Vegh (Metro North), Donna Harre and Glenn Verner-Wren (Metro South) and Michele Grant (Sunshine Coast). It is a significant achievement given workforce impacts to have this key group appointed and as I reiterate in each newsletter these roles are central to the engagement and change we are seeing in our services.

I am always reminded through these updates that this project is progressing under such challenging times thanks to the people working so hard at many different levels. Below you can read in more detail of the progress we have made in recent months and I encourage you to reach out to each other and directly to the team in HIU for more information and any offers of feedback, opportunity or support.

**Prof. Tim Geraghty**

Statewide BaSCI Project Clinical Lead



## Acquired Brain Injury Rehab ‘HUBs’ develop and patients are seen closer to home

When Kerese Amato-Ali suffered a large intracranial haemorrhage in the months before his wedding he was taken to Brisbane’s Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital in Metro North for immediate treatment. After seven days, he was transferred back to the Sunshine

Coast University Hospital where he was admitted to the inpatient rehabilitation unit for a three week block of intensive specialist rehabilitation. “He left inpatient rehab in a wheelchair and I needed to help him to shower” says Jess, Kerese’s partner, on his function at time of discharge. Once Jess and Kerese (pictured) were safely able to manage Kerese’s care at home they were offered a place in the new Neuro-Intensive Rehabilitation (NIR) service developed under the Statewide BaSCI Project and he began therapy the day following his hospital discharge.

The NIR service runs at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and can see up to 8 patients at a time, 4 days per week over a 4 week therapy block. Forty-three people have been seen since the program started in April 2022 with referrals being sent from a range of sources including acute and rehabilitation units, outpatient department and community rehabilitation teams internal to the hospital. Referrals from external hospitals account for 20% of the activity to date. The service is demonstrating great patient benefit.

“It’s really good to be home from hospital – especially when you are young like me. It gave me an extra boost mentally to be with my son and partner each night. And I knew all the people in the team and they are all so great. They know what I need to do and how to get it out of me,” said Kerese about his time in the clinic. “We had a direct line of contact and knew who to call and I was able to be involved the whole time which I really valued,” said Jess.

The team is using the Mayo Portland adaptability inventory (MPAI-4) outcome tool that is designed to assist in the clinical evaluation of people during the post-acute or non-admitted period following an ABI. It also assists in the evaluation of rehabilitation programs designed to serve people with an ABI. Early data shows participants to date have statistically significant T-score average change in domains of ability (11), adjustment (13) and participation (11) with an overall statistically significant T-score average change of 28.

The service is also reducing hospital bed days. For the 80% of referrals received internal from the hospital there has been an overall saving of 458 bed days from April to June this year with the most significant impact to the inpatient rehabilitation units where 11 patients avoided admission all together, instead transitioning home and returning for centre based day therapy. Another 15

patients have had a reduced length of stay. Director of Medical Services, Dr Khalid Ali, notes that is the equivalent of 3 inpatient rehabilitation beds saved, per day of service operation.

For clinicians, it's the true interdisciplinary nature of the clinic that is highly satisfying. "To effectively achieve the consumers goals you need all the disciplines at one table, seeking solutions for problems through collaboration. I attribute [NIR's] great service outcomes to interprofessional working. The consumer's rehabilitation cannot be delivered in silos, whatever they need to achieve their goals, we aim to deliver, working as one team to overcome many barriers." says senior occupational therapist, Olivia White.

The benefit of early supported transition home is noted by Dr Neala Milburn, Statewide BaSCI Project Clinical Lead in Sunshine Coast who sees the value of being in the home environment and returning to the centre based therapy each day. "It's great for patients and it's fantastic for carers and families. Not only is the disruption from family separation through relocation for Brisbane based specialist therapy removed but we find that the return to home is a huge transition and the support for carers in the days and weeks after a patient comes home is a huge benefit of this service. We are wrapping around the whole person and supporting them with each of the new stages of their recovery. As a Physician it's incredibly rewarding working in this team and being a part of this. I have never worked in a clinical service that we get '*thanked*' every day."

Further south, Metro North have been linking with the service at the Sunshine Coast as well as building capability under the Statewide BaSCI Project to support closer to home specialist rehabilitation care. Dr Cassandra McLennan is the Clinical Lead in Metro North and also the rehabilitation physician providing an in-reach model to acute wards in a redesigned assessment and referral pathway that is part of the Surgical Treatment and Rehabilitation Service - Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit (STARS-BIRU) pilot. This project has seen a pilot model of care implemented and 8 beds uplifted to provide specialised ABI inpatient rehabilitation at the STARS.

From the 60 referrals managed through the in-reaching process almost half have been able to be directed to and managed at STARS, reducing the demand on the unit at the Statewide BIRU. With the Sunshine Coast services 6 patients have been referred directly there allowing them to receive their specialist therapy closer to home and their community. Establishing the in-reaching component of the STARS-BIRU pilot has meant some patients with an ABI who are rehabilitation candidates have been identified earlier and recommendations provide to the treating teams to facilitate earlier readiness for specialised rehabilitation.

"The new services at Sunshine Coast alongside the Statewide BaSCI Project funded beds at STARS BIRU are in addition to the existing specialist unit at Brighton Brain Injury Service and, of course, the statewide BIRU at Princess Alexandra. This gives multiple referral options for streamlining care and informs patients of these options at bedside conversations, " said Dr McLennan. "The statewide service remains an essential pathway for those patients who will benefit

most from access to and participation in the ABI-Transitional Rehabilitation Service and we are working closely with the staff at the BIRU across the river to support this flow as we continue to develop our services locally.”

Increased access to specialist rehabilitation for patients in Queensland regardless of where they live is a key objective of the Statewide BaSCI Project. These service redesign and development projects in the area of ABI are changing the way patients move through the system and are significant to their recovery and rehabilitation experience. “I wanted to walk down the aisle at my wedding, 6 weeks after my stroke,” says Kerese of his rehabilitation goals on entering the NIR service at Sunshine Coast. “But I did more than that,” he smiles. “I danced”.



### **QuickStart supports long waits**

Global best practice notes that early admission to a specialist spinal unit results in the best clinical outcomes for people with newly acquired spinal cord injury (SCI). The Spinal Injury Unit (SIU) at Metro South HHS is the only specialist unit in Queensland. For more than 30 years it has functioned as one part of the full continuum of care offered under the Queensland Spinal Cord Injury Service (QSCIS)

that includes the Transitional Rehabilitation Program (TRP) and the Spinal Outreach Service (SPOT).

Recent wait list data collected under the Statewide BaSCI project shows the demand pressures on the service are immense with as many people on the wait list as there are beds in the unit. Under the Statewide BaSCI Project the team at Metro South have worked in consultation with partners to redesign the offering and ensure a ‘no wrong door’ approach for improved timely access to specialist spinal care for people with new spinal cord injuries.

“The wait time is months,” says Dr Claire Panagoda, Clinical Lead for SCI at BaSCI Metro South. (Pictured here with Project Officer, Donna Harre). “Resourcing and workforce issues, and the continuing impacts of Covid-19 have really seen the supply and demand challenge increase to an unprecedented level. An intervention to better support patients and the clinical teams caring for them while they await admission to SIU was identified as our first key priority for the project.”

Project Officers, Donna Harre and Glenn Verner-Wren note that providing specialist support to patients and non-specialist clinicians right across Queensland is not a new concept for the QSCIS. “SPOT has been outreaching for decades. It is their day to day work to support patients with existing injuries and to support clinicians caring for these patients. The service they provide is excellent quality and recognised internationally as a responsive and patient centred model. Our

burning platform now through has been the block at the admission end for patients with new injuries. Our BaSCI pilot solution is the design of a new intake model, clinical support service and quality clinician educational resources to ensure that patients who are referred and face a long wait are still offered the specialist spinal care they need while they wait. Without this, patients often face avoidable complications and are admitted to the SIU in a deteriorated condition.”

Called ‘QuickStart’ the pilot is triggered by referral to the redesigned QSCIS intake process. Assessment and multidisciplinary discussion allows for whole team awareness of the numbers, needs and location of people with a newly acquired injury waiting across the state. Any immediate spinal injury care support needs can be identified with the referring team and offered rapid proactive and flexibly delivered support from the new QuickStart in reach service.

The team consists of medical, nursing and allied health interdisciplinary support offered either by phone, email, teleconference or face to face (within reasonable travelling distance). Alongside the clinical team delivering this support and capacity building, QuickStart is also designing an online suite of educational resources to support non-specialist SCI clinicians with components of essential care instruction. “Clinicians outside the SIU might not have cared for a person with SCI for some time and so access to well-designed information on things like bladder and bowel, skin and respiratory care is essential and we are working with the Clinical Skills Development Centre to put together these resource in one place,” says Donna.

QuickStart is commencing a 9-month pilot following a ‘soft-launch’ in April and has already, in its early stages, received 79 referrals, provided 278 hours of care and 377 occasions of service. The offering has enabled some people to discharge direct from non-specialist units with the support of the flexible and responsive TRP and SPOT offerings wrapped around them and their families and carers.

Clinicians are welcoming input from the QuickStart:

*“Just want to highlight the amazing work that the QuickStart team are doing for our Spinal Cord Injured patients in Orthopaedics. The team’s knowledge and skills in the area means that the quality and efficiency of the Physiotherapy service being provided to these patients has improved exponentially. We all know that treating these patients for extended periods on the Orthopaedic ward is not the ideal but we have come a long way from 12 months ago with thanks to all of you and the staff on the floor giving their utmost every day in trying circumstances”.*

Other sites in the Statewide BaSCI project have identified the need to partner with and link better to the QSCIS and the new QuickStart service. Metro North has recently recruited Brooke Wadsworth to support an investigation into the current needs and issues of patients with spinal cord injury in their region. Brooke brings years of experience and expertise to the role to help understand what opportunities for improvement exist and how the relationships between clinicians and services can be better integrated during the Statewide BaSCI Project and beyond.

Further South, Gold Coast is also recruiting a nursing role with a specific focus on spine. To the north, Townsville is in the early stages of re-establishing a comprehensive transitional spinal care service to care for north Queensland patients closer to home.

These investments and initiatives are indication of the value of the integration of services across Queensland and the benefit of working together in the BaSCI Project to overcome complex statewide issues with collaborative patient centred solutions.

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## Annual Forum

On June 27 2022 stakeholders from the Statewide BaSCI Project met in Brisbane at the Healthcare Improvement Unit for the second Annual Forum.

It was a full day of information from implementation sites, guest presenters and colleagues interstate from the New South Wales Agency for Clinical Innovation who all generously shared their work. The event demonstrated both the progress that has been made under the project and the continuing opportunities for improvement that remain.

Pictured here are Leah Vegh and Beth Cunningham who spoke about the project work at Metro North HHS. After such an extended time of limitations to in person meetings it was also a wonderful opportunity to come together as a group and network.

A summary of proceedings can be accessed by members of our project Collaborative  [here](#).

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## Statewide Working Group Update

Our Working Group structure continues to support the progress of key deliverables to the Commonwealth under the project.

The *Data and KPIs Working Group* has initiated a 3-month pilot collecting data for the first set of project KPIs. Project Officers in each in-scope HHS have worked with their teams to develop local systems and process that are allowing project visibility of key metrics around access and equity. A smaller group has taken carriage of the development and testing of a Patient Reported Experience Measure (PREM). Excitingly, the data request to Statistical Service Branch has been approved and we expect to have this rich source of information returned this month. This body of work being led by Areti Kennedy and Michele Brunello will support the evaluation of our project efforts and interventions as well as shape activities in future years.

The *SCI Pathways Working Group* led by Dr Monica Steel has delivered draft access pathways for both newly acquired SCI and pre-existing SCI. A body of consultation is underway through focus group session with key stakeholders in each BaSCI HHS. Many thanks go to Dr Panagoda and Donna Harre for taking the time to meet and listen to clinicians across the state who are interfacing with the new pilot QuickStart project. The conversations are providing valuable feedback and wider consultation beyond the project sites will be initiated soon.

The *ABI Pathways Working Group* has had a revision of membership to dive into the complex access issues for patients with moderate to severe ABI. A service mapping exercise has supported a sharing and growing awareness between all partners of the scope of work currently being delivered in BaSCI HUB sites and the tertiary service at Princess Alexandra. In parallel, a small group is progressing with the details of the mild traumatic brain injury pathway and linking to the Statewide HealthPathways program to support integration with general practice across Queensland. A third package of work around patients with prolonged disorders of consciousness is planned for later in the year. We are hugely thankful to the leadership of Aleksandra Ballingall who has supported the group to this point and is taking leave from next week.

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## Coming up

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## Planning Days

With the passing of recent Covid-19 wave we are now planning to come together for two dedicated days of solution design and priority setting for the outer years of the Statewide BaSCI Project.

We are thrilled to be working with Bridge Labs for the ABI day on October 10 at Victoria Park. Part of Clinical Excellence Queensland, Bridge Labs was initiated in 2020 to support innovation around complex challenges in health by partnering at the frontline with key experts from creative design, human factors engineering and the safety & systems sciences specialties.

The SCI day planned on November 28 will also involve consumers and clinicians from across the state and will support us to define the best way to structure project activities to 2025 for the valuable impact for patients statewide.

## Join the Collaborative

If you are not receiving this email directly and would like to connect with the project please email [BaSCI@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:BaSCI@health.qld.gov.au) to join the Implementation Collaborative and subscribe to the newsletter. You can also engage directly with your colleagues and peers in the [TEAMS](#) we have established for the group.

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