

**Media Release – For immediate publication**

**Brisbane South PHN's domestic and family violence training on the agenda for Minister Hunt and Ross Vasta MP**

19 December 2018 - Minister for Health the Hon Greg Hunt and Federal Member for Bonner Ross Vasta will visit Baywest Medical Centre yesterday, one of 65 general practices who have received Brisbane South PHN's Recognise, Respond, Refer domestic and family violence training since its launch in November 2017.

Recognise, Respond, Refer is an integrated health response to domestic and family violence, and seeks to equip all general practice staff (including after-hours staff) with the skills to identify signs of abuse, effectively respond and refer to support services, when required.

Brisbane South PHN was recently recognised within the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board 2017-2018 Annual Report, which identified the Recognise, Respond, Refer program as an example of PHN-led initiatives aimed at improving responses by primary health care providers to domestic and family violence.

Minister Hunt and Ross Vasta MP visited Baywest Medical Centre to learn more about how Recognise, Respond, Refer is building the primary health care sector's capacity to address domestic and family violence through education and awareness.

Baywest Medical Centre General Practitioner Dr Rebecca Levy says the training held in July 2018 was highly beneficial for her practice.

"Gaining a deeper understanding on our role in identifying and responding to family and domestic abuse was incredibly important, especially as full-time GPs see up to five women per week who have experienced some form of intimate partner abuse in the last 12 months," Dr Levy said.

"This training is assisting our practice to respond to domestic and family violence, provide early intervention to our patients and potentially save lives."

Recognise, Respond, Refer supports practice staff to identify abuse at the earliest opportunity and ensure the best outcomes for patients who disclose an abusive relationship within the primary health care setting.

Brisbane South PHN CEO Sue Scheinpflug says that Recognise, Respond, Refer is contributing to the Australian Government's strategy to reduce the levels of domestic violence in Australia.

"Strengthening the role of primary health care in recognising and responding to domestic and family violence was a recommendation in the *Not Now, Not Ever* report, and Brisbane South PHN is proud of the role the Recognise, Respond, Refer program continues to play in this area," Ms Scheinpflug said.

Since November 2017, Recognise, Respond, Refer has also been adapted to be culturally appropriate for delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Services (ATSI CCHS).

Two ATSI CCHS trainings have subsequently been delivered to staff from ATSI CCHS across the Brisbane south region, with training to be provided to all 10 ATSI CCHS site in 2019.

Brisbane South PHN has also commissioned The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) to explore the role of primary health care in the response to domestic and family violence.

The key outcome of this work will be an overarching model to integrate primary health care into the domestic and family violence system in the Brisbane south region, with a strategy to implement and evaluate this model in the 2019-2020 period to be developed in the new year.

Central Queensland University, Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research will continue to roll out the training across the Brisbane South PHN region to a total of 70 general practices by 30 June 2019.

#### Key statistics

- Two women are killed nearly every week in Australia due to family and domestic violence.
- Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to the preventable death, disability and illness burden in women aged 15-45.
- It has been estimated that full-time GPs are seeing up to five women per week who have experienced some form of intimate partner abuse – physical, emotional, sexual – in the past 12 months.
- One in three women in current relationships attending routine general practice clinics have experienced partner abuse in their lifetime.
- Women do disclose abuse to their GPs in significant numbers, particularly if they are directly asked. In a Brisbane study, one-third of abused women had told a GP about the abuse, while only 13.2% had been asked by a doctor. GPs from this study said they did not inquire about abuse because of lack of time and appropriate skills, and a perception that they were unable to help abused women.
- Women are significantly more likely to disclose if they are asked by their doctor about the abuse. The gender of the GP does not affect disclosure if communications skills are good.
- Aboriginal women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised because of family violence than other women.
- 2.1 per cent of men (since the age of 15) have experienced violence perpetrated by a parent against them, compared with 3.5 per cent of women—with men making up 37 per cent of victims of parent-on-child violence.
- More than one million children in Australia are affected by family and domestic violence.

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