



# STAFF NEWSLETTER

To be a vibrant provider of care

## THE MONTH IN REVIEW

By Meryn Pease (CEO)



COVID-19 lockdown number five commenced on 14 July following the transmission of the Delta variant into Victoria. The key difference with this variant to previous outbreaks, is the rapid rate of transmission, it takes less than 48 hours from exposure to transmission.

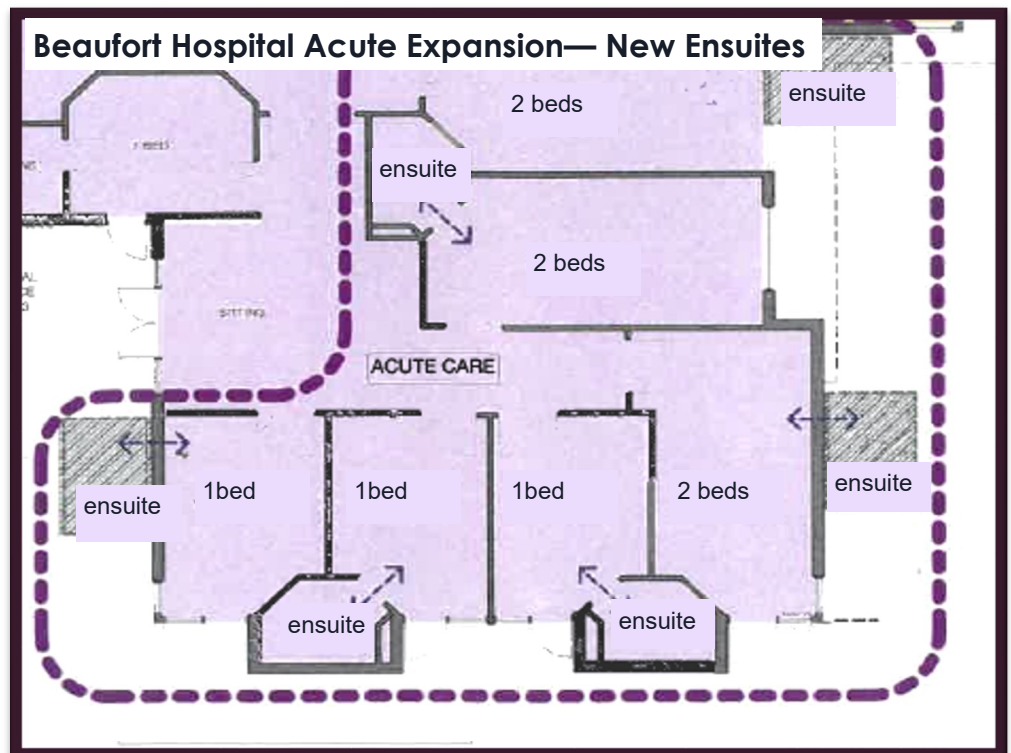
A huge thank you to all the staff who have voluntarily received their first or second doses of the COVID vaccine.

I am pleased to report that currently 91% of staff have received the first dose and 86% have received both doses of the appropriate vaccine. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to the Health Service and for keeping our community safe.

Thank you to Christina Morvell, Infection Control Coordinator, for leading our vaccination program. Christina has also led our sub-hub as part of the Grampians Public Health Unit, which has enabled those vulnerable people in our Skipton community to access the vaccination.

I would also like to thank the nurse immunizers who have helped at each clinic. This adaptability and flexibility is bringing our vision to life – to be a vibrant provider of care.

I am excited to report that our application for Regional Health Infrastructure Fund (RHIF) Round 5 2020/2021 has been successful.



At the Beaufort campus, this will enable the construction of three additional ensuites for the acute unit and the construction of a purpose built building for the storage and management of sterile stock and other consumables. We are planning to have this work completed by the end of June 2022. As this project progresses you will be kept updated.

... Continued over page

## OUR BUSINESS

From 1 July 2021, the Aged Care Act 1997 changes with the introduction of the restrictive practices requirements, which places additional obligations by our staff, when a restrictive practice is enacted as a last resort to keep our resident safe. Andrea will be providing further information in coming weeks.

This Friday, 6 August, the Executive team will be donning their gardening gear and working with residents in the Beaufort Hostel rose garden, to give it a tidy up. You are welcome to come along and help us or just enjoy the BBQ lunch we will be putting on at the Hostel. Social distancing and masks remain mandatory.

I am pleased to report that our financial position this year has improved on the prior year result. This year we have delivered a surplus of \$724,000, while continuing to deliver and expand clinical services and delivering a significant number of capital projects. This is the second year in succession that we have posted a significant surplus. This has only been possible by everyone doing their best and contributing to our organisation wide team.

As always, please let me know your ideas on how we can improve our services or what you think we are missing, as we strive to deliver safe, quality care and services for our communities.

*Regards Meryn*



## BOARD DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT

**David Lenehan**  
Board Chair

I was appointed to the BSHS Board of Directors on 1 April 2019. I have been the Chair of the Board since 1 July 2019 and also Chair of a number of Board Subcommittees. I retired from full time employment in 2013 having served as the CEO of Hepburn Health Service (HHS) for approximately 20 years. Prior to my role with HHS I worked for many years in Victoria's mental health services program. Some of this time was spent in the Department's head office but mainly I was involved in the management of mental health facilities such as Royal Park Psychiatric Hospital in Melbourne and Lakeside Hospital in Ballarat.

Following my retirement I performed some relieving CEO work, took up a Director's position with UFS Pharmacies and for the past couple of years have provided part time accreditation and compliance support for a Ballarat based disability services provider.

I was encouraged to join the BSHS Board and feel that with my Hospital and Health management experience I am able to contribute in a meaningful way to the governance and strategic planning for the Health Service.

I am also committed to working with the Board and management team and supporting staff in delivering person focussed high quality integrated healthcare to the communities of Beaufort and Skipton. I believe that access to good healthcare is a high priority for all individuals and families and we are responsible to deliver that standard of service.

On a personal note I am married, live in Ballarat, have two adult sons and a small grandson. My interests include travel (when we can), spending time with family, gardening and supporting Collingwood.

## OUR BUSINESS

### Board Matters:



The July meeting of the BSHS Board took place on Wednesday, 28 July with all Directors in attendance via Zoom technology.

Sadly for me, I should have been in Airlie Beach this week but with COVID-19 restrictions and border closures, our trip was cancelled and hopefully can be rescheduled later this year.

As this was the first meeting of the new financial year the annual election of Board Office Bearers was the first item on the agenda. I have been elected as the Board Chair for the next two years along with Karlie Tucker as Board Deputy Chair. All Directors accepted nominations to the various Board Subcommittees.

As indicated in the last newsletter the Boards of Ballarat, Horsham, Stawell and Edenhope Health Services were discussing future partnership/amalgamation options. The outcome of these discussions has been a formal proposal to create a new amalgamated health service. The proposal has been approved by the four boards and submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Health for consideration and subsequent approval by the Minister of Health. It is understood that the new amalgamated health service will be formalised, effective from 1 November this year.

The Board was pleased to note that BSHS has been successful in obtaining a significant grant from the "Regional Health Infrastructure Fund" to construct three additional ensuites in the Beaufort Hospital acute unit. Congratulations to Meryn and the Executive team for the work involved in the preparation of this successful application.

On the money side of things, Chief Finance Officer, Chris Nykoluk presented the finance report for the year ended 30 June 2021. After a year that has presented significant challenges related to COVID-19 outbreaks and restrictions, it is pleasing to note that BSHS has reported a financial surplus and a much improved balance sheet.

As we move out of the recent COVID-19 lockdown in Victoria, the Commonwealth has determined that it will be mandatory for all aged care workers to have received their first COVID-19 vaccination by 17<sup>th</sup> of September. BSHS is currently awaiting State Government advice and guidelines regarding the implementation of this policy.

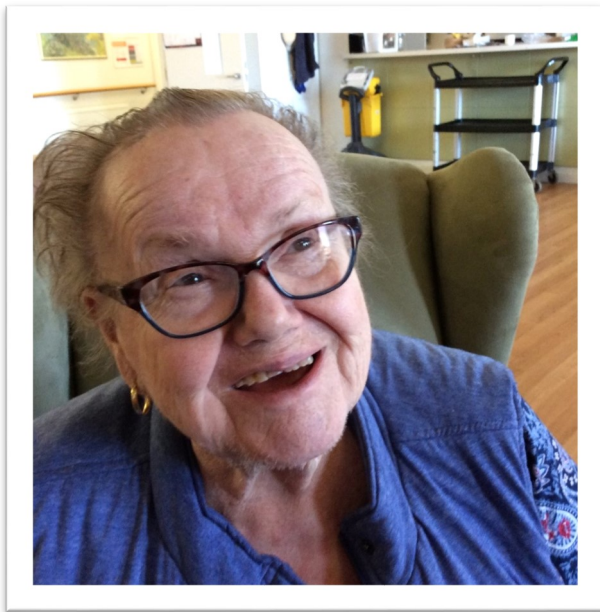
It is clear that that the "pathway" out of COVID-19 is largely dependent on high levels of vaccination across the general population and it is likely that future travel, employment, attendance at events etc., will require a vaccination certificate.

In closing, and on behalf of the Board, I would like to once again thank management and staff for their efforts in maintaining high standards of quality care throughout the past financial year.

Regards,

David Lenehan

## OUR CONSUMERS



Irmgard Christian

## COMPLIMENTS

To all the wonderful staff at the hospital. I would like to send my most sincere thanks for the gentle attention and heart felt care for my dad during his time here. You are beautiful people.

Our family cannot express enough our gratitude to all staff, along with Dr. Anderson and Dr. Badrika, for your professionalism, expertise, kindness, mindfulness and care.

## Introducing Irmgard:

I was born in Hamburg, Germany and at 18 I travelled out to Australia with my sister and brother-in-law, on board the Anna Saline, which sailed from Bremerhaven, on the North Sea.

My parents were reluctant to let me go and did not want to sign the permission form but I said, "I really want to go and if I don't go now with my sister, I will go alone when I become of age and I won't come back!".

My mother signed the form and there were many tears.

We had a lot of fun on the boat, five weeks of socializing, dancing and always trying to avoid my brother-in-law, who wanted to curb my fun!

I worked in Melbourne for a small company as an embroiderer. Our company took in many different types of clothing for us to stitch embroidery onto. I enjoyed this work and worked there for about 4 years.

I have three children, a girl, Doris and twin boys Werner and Ronald. My husband, Bernard and I raised our family in Ferntree Gully but bought a block of land just out of Linton.

After Bernard died I moved to the block at Linton where I remained until coming here. In Linton an old childhood friend, Gerd and I became partners and had many fun times exploring Australia over the 20 years we had together.

I love cats and dogs and have owned both at different times. I do miss my little dog Sweetie who is now staying with my sister, Louise.

My hobbies included painting, embroidery and music. I love Chinese food!

*By The Leisure & Lifestyle team—Skipton*



# OUR CONSUMERS

## LEISURE & LIFESTYLE:

By The Leisure & Lifestyle team—Skipton

So much concentration as we made monster sculptures with the Skipton Kinder children, using Konnex, which kept everyone very quiet!!



Monster creating is a serious business!!!

Everyone very much enjoyed it when Heather's daughter, Corrine, came to visit with her horse, Disco.

Lots of pats and smiles before Disco left to go home for a well deserved rest, after a day of hunting and people pleasing!!



The first week of Term 3 for the kindergarten and it was lovely to see everyone again.

Here we are singing "If you are happy and you know it ....."



Mackinnon Resident Heather, her daughter Corrine and Disco.





**OUR CONSUMERS**

**LEISURE & LIFESTYLE:**

**The Magic Table ...**

The Magic 'Tovertafel' table is proving to be popular. We are pleased that the 'Tovertafel' is now in operation at the Beaufort Nursing Home.

The interactive games are a lot of fun and even bring out the competitive spirit in some!

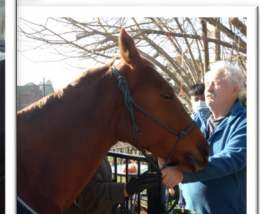
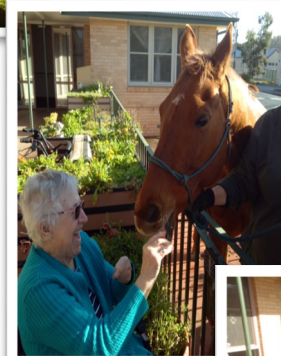
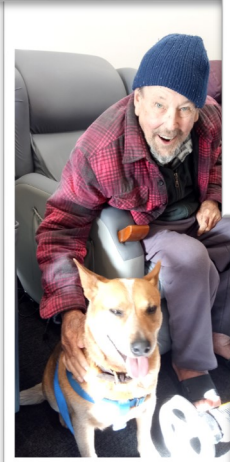
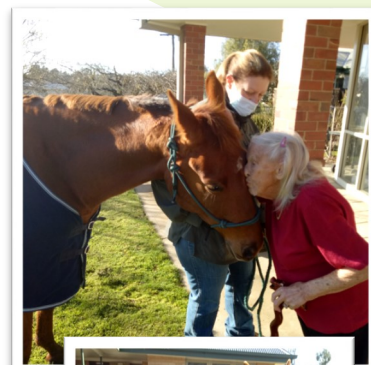
*(Left to right) Shirley, Mary, Beryl, Gwen, Brian and Netta (Skipton)*



Residents certainly enjoyed a visit from Jane and her popular, much loved dog 'Pig'.

Pets and animals play such an important part of our lives. The unconditional love of a pet can do more than keep us company. They can help alleviate stress, anxiety, depression, and feelings of loneliness and social isolation.

Residents had a lovely time with Jane and her Quarter horse 'Red'. Their visit brought back so many special and fond memories!



By Jane—Leisure & Lifestyle team—Beaufort



## OUR CONSUMERS

### Celebrating Birthdays:



Heather and Beryl enjoyed helping to make our new 'bunch of balloons birthday calendar'.

When it's your birthday, your balloon rises above the bunch of balloons.



### Getting into the Olympic Spirit ...

Beryl is standing in front of the Olympic rings, made to celebrate the Olympics out of pool noodles.



### Women's Health & Wellbeing Forum

By Jayde Ringin  
(Health Promotion Officer)

Following on from a successful Men's Health and Wellbeing Forum, BSHS is working in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Beaufort and the Beaufort Country Women's Association (CWA) in organising a Women's Health and Wellbeing Forum to be held during Women's Health Week in September.

The event will involve a free morning tea, guest speakers, health checks and an opportunity for community members to socialise.

Save the date –  
**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September.**  
More information to come.



By Jayde Ringin (Health Promotion Officer)


### Ingredients

Olive oil spray  
1 ½ cups wholemeal self-raising flour  
1 ½ cups self-raising flour  
2 cups reduced-fat natural yoghurt  
¼ cup no added salt tomato paste  
1 cup baby spinach, chopped  
½ cup basil leaves, chopped  
½ red capsicum, chopped  
½ cup mozzarella, grated


### Method

1. Pre-heat oven to 180°C. Spray a round 22cm baking dish with olive oil and line with baking paper.
2. Mix both flours and yoghurt in a bowl. Knead on a floured surface for a few minutes – add more yoghurt if the mix is too dry or extra flour if too wet.
3. Roll out the dough with a rolling pin and shape in a rectangle about 0.5cm thick. Spread tomato paste on the dough and sprinkle with the rest of ingredients.
4. Roll the dough, from the long side, into a log. Cut into 12 pieces and place in the baking tin, push them up against each other. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden and cooked through. Allow to cool slightly before serving.

## OUR CONSUMERS



**Keep your smile for life**



*When was your last dental check up?*  
dentalhealthweek.com.au | 2 - 8 August

### Dental Health Week:

By Jayde Ringin  
(Health Promotion Officer)

Follow 4 key steps to look after your own and your family's oral health.

1. Brush twice per day and use a fluoride toothpaste – fluoride helps to prevent decay.
2. See your dentist regularly – have a check-up appointment with the dentist every 6 months, not only when you have a problem.
3. Floss between your teeth daily
4. Consume less than 6 teaspoons of added sugar per day.

1 in 5 adults do not brush their teeth twice daily. Brushing teeth twice daily using a fluoride toothpaste, helps to prevent tooth decay. After brushing, spit and don't rinse. This helps more fluoride to stay in the mouth to prevent tooth decay.

Only 1 in 4 adults floss their teeth daily. Flossing isn't just for removing food between your teeth – flossing can help clean the side surfaces of your teeth that your toothbrush can miss. Regular flossing can reduce gum disease, plaque and decay.

## Brushing

### Correct brushing technique



Squeeze a pea-sized blob of toothpaste onto a soft bristled brush.



Brush gently using circular motions. If you brush too hard it can harm your gums.



Brush all the surfaces of your teeth paying special attention to where the tooth meets the gum. This is where plaque builds up.



Remember to brush behind your front teeth using the tip of the toothbrush.



Keep brushing for at least two minutes and do this morning and night.

**Did you know that it takes two to three minutes to brush your teeth properly but most people only spend 30 seconds or less?**

For more information on your dental health visit [ada.org.au](http://ada.org.au)



## OUR CONSUMERS



By Erica Smith (People and Culture Manager)

The Victorian Gender Equality Act came into effect on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021. It acknowledges that gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice, it brings significant economic, social and health benefits for Victoria and importantly is a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls. Gender equality is a shared responsibility across the Victorian community.

BSHS shows its commitment to advancing gender equality and reducing levels of violence against women through our involvement in the Grampians based Community of Respect and Equality Alliance (CoRE Alliance), Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence (SHRFV) and The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM).

What does this mean for BSHS?

The Victorian public sector, local councils and universities are required to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality and to consider and promote gender equality in their policies, programs and services.

These obligations are ongoing and are actioned through two separate areas of work.

The first is internally focused and includes a workplace gender audit which establishes baseline organisational data against workplace gender equality indicators. This audit will be the basis of our Gender Equality Action Plan, due for submission in December 2021.

The second area of work, the Gender Impact Assessment (GIA), is focused on outcomes for the public and considers how organisational policies, programs and services will meet the needs of women, men and gender diverse people. They are more external in focus and aim to create better and fairer outcomes and ensure all people have equal access to opportunities and resources. A GIA is required when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service which has a direct and significant impact on the public. Gender Impact Assessments are everyone's responsibility and all activity and actions will be recorded and collated for reporting in two years' time.

What does this mean for BSHS staff?

Following analysis of the Workplace Gender Audit we will be consulting with staff. This is your opportunity to provide your thoughts, perspective and priorities for promoting gender equality in the workplace. This information will be key in the writing of a four year Gender Equality Action Plan.

If you would like more information about Gender Equality and how you can be involved please email Erica Smith, People and Culture Manager, at [ericas@bshs.org.au](mailto:ericas@bshs.org.au).



## OUR QUALITY & SAFETY



The first of the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has now been passed into law.

This change has focused on the use of restraint and ensuring that any form of restraint is only used as a last resort, the impact on the resident is considered, and consent has been given for the use of the restraint by the resident or their representative.

Restraint is a restrictive practice which is defined in the Aged Care Act and is *any practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of the care recipient*

The Quality of Care Principles expand on this definition to say that "each of the following is a restrictive practice in relation to a care recipient":

- ✔ Chemical restraint - is administration of medication which influences, moderates or controls a resident's behaviour. Where the resident does not have a diagnosed mental disorder, physical condition or needing end of life care.

If you have any concerns regarding restrictive practice, please speak or email our Nurse Unit Managers, Nicole Clarke (Beaufort) Petrina Phillips or Jo Dunne (Skipton)

By Andrea Flenley (Nursing Director Quality and Safety)

- ✔ Environmental restraint - is restricting a resident's access to an outside space, removing or restricting access to an activity, or limiting or removing access to a wanted item, such as a walking frame, by putting it out of reach.
- ✔ Mechanical restraint - is use of a lap belt or princess chair, bed rails, low beds or use of clothing which limits movement and is unable to be removed by the consumer.
- ✔ Physical restraint - physically holding a consumer in a specific position to enable personal care issues such as showering to be attended to, pinning a consumer down, or physically moving a consumer to stop them moving into a specified area where they may wish to go.
- ✔ Seclusion - is placing a consumer alone in a space or room from which they cannot exit, including in a space by themselves where their access to a call bell or walker is limited, or imposing a 'time out'.



### What does this mean?

- \* That any restrictive practice is only used as a last resort to prevent harm to the resident or others.
- \* That we have legislated documentation requirements.
- \* That consent from the resident or representative has been recorded, in the instance of chemical restraint this consent must be completed by the GP, with the resident or representative.
- \* That the restrictive practice is assessed regularly and that the resident has a behaviour support plan.



## OUR QUALITY & SAFETY



### Executive Safety Walk Rounds

As part of the BSHS commitment to Patient and Staff Safety, an Executive Safety Walk Round team will be visiting the Skipton Hostel areas:

**Thursday, 19 August 2021 at 2:00 pm.**

This is an opportunity for any member of staff to talk to the Walk round team regarding any concerns they have about patient safety or about the quality of care being provided to our patients, our residents and their families.

### PROMPT— New and updated documents:

#### New documents:

- The Charter of Rights Health Care & Residential Aged care (replaces Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in Victoria & Patient Charter of Healthcare Rights Policy and Procedure).

#### Updated documents:

- BSHS My Health Record
- Business Continuity Plan
- Costs Associated with Medical Care
- Evidenced Based Practice - Medical Practice
- Retention and Disposal of Medical Records
- Clinical Governance Framework




**ENVIRONMENTAL  
COMMITTEE**

Passionate about environmental  
change?

**COMMITTEE VACANCIES**

Sustainability Committee?

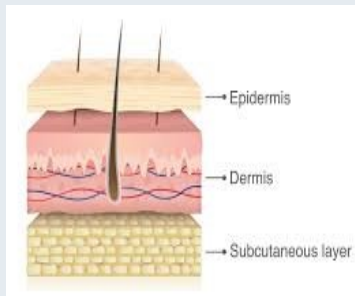
We are looking for staff to join  
our Committee.  
Help raise awareness of environmental  
impacts and identify exciting new  
initiatives.

If you are interested in joining this  
Committee, please contact  
Darren White (Corporate Services  
Manager) [Darrenw@bshs.org.au](mailto:Darrenw@bshs.org.au)

## OUR QUALITY & SAFETY

### All About Skin ...

(By Nicole Clarke—  
Nurse Unit  
Manager  
Beaufort)



We are excited to have successfully implemented at the Beaufort campus, a pressure injury prevention program, with the hope to roll it out at Skipton in the near future.

Our residents most at risk of developing a pressure injury have been placed on this program.

All residents that are at risk have a blue star on the door, with the acronym 'SSKIN'.

Staff attend to residents on the program every two hours, they have a check list to sign off for the care they have attended to for the resident.

On the check list staff have to ensure they are changing the residents position, attending to skin care and hygiene, ensuring pressure relieving devices are at the correct pressure and offering hydration and/or nutrition.

Our staff have embraced this new program with much enthusiasm and it is pleasing to be receiving a lot of positive feedback from them.

I give my utmost thanks to the amazing team at Beaufort and Skipton Health Service for taking on this new program with such a positive and open attitude, as we continue to strive to give our best possible care to our patients and residents.



A global initiative to improve the lives of over 590 million people worldwide living with dysphagia.

### IDDSI (International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative) Update:

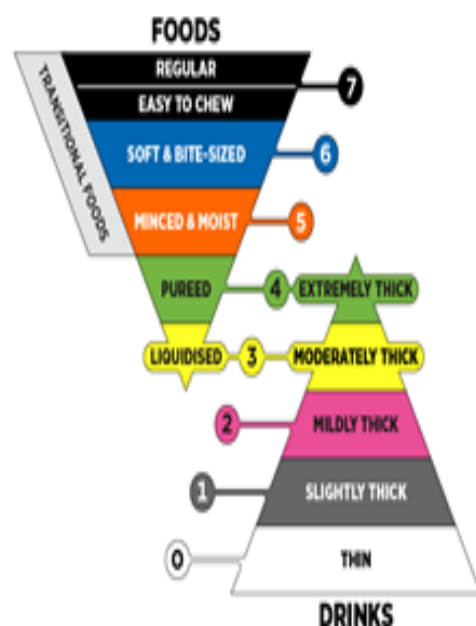
(By Nicole Clarke—  
Nurse Unit Manager Beaufort)

Unfortunately we had to postpone the rollout of the IDDSI program this month. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and lockdown, education was postponed.

We are excited to inform you that we are going to roll the program out in August, after staff have undertaken education.

We continue to have our weekly food focus meetings to discuss how we can improve the dining experience at Beaufort and Skipton Health Service.

IDDSI Classification of Foods





## OUR PEOPLE

### EDUCATION news ...

Sean Duggan from Ambulance Victoria facilitated the first sessions of our monthly education series for our clinical staff. These sessions are designed to review and develop new skills. This month the education explored the assessment of 'Urgent Care' presentations through questions, conversations and case studies. We look forward to the next session.

The final mandatory training day is scheduled for the 12<sup>th</sup> August. If you have not attended the training to date please see your manager so that they can arrange for you to attend. We are required to have a 100% staff attendance to this training. At the moment we are sitting at 84%.

**AIMTop:** There has been an Expression of Interest circulated for clinical staff who are interested in attending the 'Aim for the Top' program. This program includes four study days that focus on:

- Introduction to age-related physiological changes
- Patient assessment
- Pain assessment and management
- Delirium, Dementia
- Depression Sepsis Pharmacotherapy
- Polypharmacy Chemical Restraint
- Injury and the Older person Elder
- Abuse and the Aged Care Act
- Palliative care

There are 14 spots available for our Health Service. If you would like to attend this program you will need to attend all four study days.

For more details or if you would like to take part in this course, please contact your manager.

By Kim Stevens (Learning & Development Manager)



### Glitterbug:

To add a little fun to our world of education we have purchased some 'Glitterbug'.

This allows us to show visibly the effectiveness of hand hygiene and cleaning practices.

The education staff will be using this throughout both sites and all work areas. So watch out for some 'Glitterbugs' coming your way.



### All About Allergen training for hospitals

### Don't forget to complete your All About Allergen Training

Please complete your 'All About Allergen Training'. All About Allergen's training needs to be completed by all support services, PCW and clinical staff that come into contact with food. For more information please go to: <https://foodallergytraining.org.au/course/index.php?categoryid=3>

- \* [All About Allergens for Hospitals: Kitchen Managers and Supervisors](#)
- \* [All About Allergens for Hospitals: Kitchen Staff](#)
- \* [All about Allergens for Hospitals: Ward Managers and Nurses](#)
- \* [All about Allergens for Hospitals: Ward Support Staff](#)

## OUR PEOPLE

### Staff Spotlight:

#### Rhonda Slater —

Allied Health Intake & Care  
Coordinator, District Nursing



#### How long have you worked at BSHS?

I started working at Beaufort in 1981. I have worked at both campuses (mainly at Skipton) on and off since then, in between having my three boys. I have worked consecutively at the Health Service for 30 years, coming up this September.

#### Days and location that you work?

I work two days per week in my new role. One day at each campus. I also work one day a week with District Nursing Administration at Skipton.

#### What does your role involve?

My new role involves coordinating the Allied Health referrals, allocating them to the appropriate service/clinician. I also support and work together with the Allied Health Clinicians and Administration staff to ensure clients receive the best care possible.

#### What is the favourite thing about your role and what are you looking forward to in your new role?

I really enjoy working together with the Allied Health staff.

#### What do you enjoy doing when not at work?

I like spending time with my family, having coffee with my friends and going on holidays.

#### Three things you can't do without.

Family, friends, good health.

### New Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer Appointed:

Jai Edmonds has recently been appointed into the joint position as the Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer and will work with Beaufort and Skipton Health Service, East Grampians Health Service and Stawell Regional Health.

We welcome Jai to his new role. Please introduce yourself and welcome Jai over the coming weeks.

## LAST MANDATORY TRAINING DAY

Thursday 12 August

8:30am-4:30pm

If you haven't attended one of these training days, please check with your Manager so you can be rostered to attend.

For more information contact Kim Stevens, Judith Lancucki or your Manager.



## OUR PEOPLE

### Staff Spotlight:

#### Jenny Holdsworth—

Medical Practice Manager &  
Practice Registered Nurse



#### How long have you worked at BSHS?

I have worked at the Health Service for five years.

#### Days and location that you work?

I work at the Skipton Medical Practice for three days per week.

#### What does your role involve?

My new role as Medical Practice Manager involves ensuring the practice runs smoothly, efficiently and safely. This involves a lot of computer screen time, organising accreditation requirements, and supporting our staff.

#### Favorite thing about your role?

I enjoy working with fantastic people.

#### What are you looking forward to in your new role?

I look forward to extending my knowledge and skills in the management area of the Medical Practice and supporting the staff to provide excellent care to our patients.

#### What do you enjoy doing when you're not at work?

Travel anywhere! Catching up with family and friends, textile art, embroidery and quilting.

#### Three things you can't live without?

Family and friends, our pets and good health.



HEALTHY  
WORKPLACES Achievement  
Program

By Jayde Ringin (Health Promotion Officer)

#### Achievement Program

Following on from the work that Amy and the Healthy Eating Working Group were a part of last year in implementing a healthy food policy and healthy food choices within BSHS, the working group have put together a feedback survey.

WE WANT  
YOUR FEEDBACK



This is to allow staff members the opportunity to provide feedback,

both positive and negative, in relation to BSHS's healthy eating project to identify what could be improved.

Follow the link below to complete survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/L2FHKTH>

Hardcopy surveys are available at both Beaufort and Skipton hospital receptions. They can be completed and returned to hospital reception.

Your time taken to complete these surveys is much appreciated and we will ensure that your feedback is considered.

## OUR QUALITY & SAFETY



Staff flu  
vaccination  
rate is  
currently  
53.5%

Staff flu  
vaccination  
rate required  
to be over 92%

Staff required to  
have 2 COVID-  
19 vaccinations,  
plus 1 flu  
vaccination

### About Influenza

Influenza, commonly known as 'the flu', is an illness caused by a group of viruses (the influenza viruses) that infect the respiratory tract. Influenza infection usually has different symptoms and causes a more severe illness than most other common viral respiratory infections and may be a life-threatening infection in certain people; it should not be confused with the common cold!

In most parts of Australia, influenza outbreaks are seasonal, occurring between late autumn and early spring. Seasonal outbreaks occur every year and vary from mild sporadic outbreaks to serious epidemics; it is estimated that between 5 and 20% of the population may be infected annually.

By Andrea Flenley (Nursing Director Quality and Safety)  
Christina Morvell (Infection Control Co-Ordinator)

### Does the flu vaccine protect against COVID-19?

The flu vaccine won't protect you against COVID-19 (coronavirus), but it will reduce your risk of influenza — which leads to thousands of hospitalisations each year. By getting the flu vaccine, you can reduce the strain on the health service.

### Can I get the influenza (flu) vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time?

You can get the Pfizer or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine — but not on the same day. You should wait at least 7 days between receiving a dose of COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine.

### Can the flu shot give me the flu?

No. All flu vaccines used in Australia are 'inactivated', which means they do not contain the live flu virus — so you can't catch the flu from the vaccine.

### Sometimes I get the flu despite having had the flu shot — why should I bother?

Flu vaccination prevents illness in up to 6 in 10 healthy adults under the age of 65. Because the vaccine is not effective in absolutely every case, some people may still catch the virus after having the flu shot. But the risk of illness is still reduced.

### Can I get the flu vaccine if I have an egg allergy?

The influenza vaccine is typically grown in eggs. But the traces of egg protein that remain after the vaccine is made are so tiny that the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCI) says both adults and children with egg allergy can be safely vaccinated against the flu.