

Hands & Heart

EDITION 4 | AUGUST 2021



Cabrini
OUTREACH



Welcome to the latest edition of Hands & Heart

As Victorians
find themselves
buckling down
once again for

our sixth lockdown, we can look back collectively at the tremendous achievements and progress we have made over the past three months and our humbling resilience during trying times. We have witnessed the birth of our new primary health care clinic 'Clinic Sihat' for vulnerable people seeking asylum in the Shepparton region, as well as an expansion of our psychosocial support services to regional Mildura. Then there is the beginning of our women's mental health inpatient service in Elsternwick, which I am honoured to be a part of. And of course, the remarkable way that our health workers at Cabrini Asylum Seeker Health Hub have adapted to new procedures and protocols in the face of COVID-19.

And so we would like to say a big thank you, not only for the tireless effort of our employed and pro bono teams at Cabrini Outreach – who ensure that our refugee and asylum seeker clients receive the quality healthcare, essential medicines and support that they need – but also for the strength, power and courage of our valued supporters, donors, and partners overseas who continue to remind us of the generosity and strength that humans are capable of. As has been proven in these recent months, it is now more important than ever for us all to spread kindness and patience and persevere proudly.

Sharon Sherwood

Chief of Mental Health and Outreach Services



The Cabrini Outreach and Primary Care Connect team at the opening of Clinic Sihat.

CLINIC SIHAT - CABRINI OUTREACH IS NOW OPEN IN SHEPPARTON!

The theme for World Refugee Week 2021 was 'Unity – the way forward'. To top off this important week, Clinic Sihat - Cabrini Outreach officially opened its doors to the Shepparton community!

Operating in partnership with and on the premises of Primary Care Connect, Clinic Sihat - Cabrini Outreach now provides free essential healthcare services for people seeking asylum, undocumented migrants, vulnerable temporary visa holders and refugees up to six months after arrival. Translated to mean 'health' in Arabic, Hazaragi and Malay, Clinic Sihat offers access to an experienced GP and practice nurse who can provide health treatment and diagnosis, specialist referrals, and organise free medications through a pharmacy waiver program. The opening of the clinic was featured in the Shepparton News, as well as on WIN News where our practice nurse Hannah Juhmann was interviewed!

"People seeking asylum have specific needs in primary care, requiring the use of interpreting services, refugee health screening, and understanding of the psychosocial impacts of their protection application process."
(Hannah Juhmann, Practice Nurse at Clinic Sihat)

"Primary care is too important to just let a whole segment of the community go without. I hope other local General Practitioners will be willing to help us provide this critical care." (Dr Malcolm Altson, GP at Clinic Sihat)

To make a referral or to donate to the clinic, please visit our website at www.cabrinioutreach.com.au. Or if you – or someone you know – might be interested in working as an employed nurse or pro bono GP (including via Telehealth) at Clinic Sihat, please get in touch with us at clinicsihat@cabrini.com.au.



GP Dr Malcolm Altson (left) and practice nurse Hannah Juhmann (right) at Clinic Sihat.



People from the St Philips community in Eswatini, waiting to learn about COVID-19 from clinic nurse David.

ACHIEVING COMMUNITY EDUCATION AT ST PHILIPS, ESWATINI

Over the decades that the St Philips community in Eswatini has received health information from our partners at the local clinic, they have come to trust them – allowing for the delivery of trusted health information both from within the clinic and during outreach visits.

Each time a new health threat emerges or an intervention is introduced, the community engages with the clinic staff at St Phillip's Mission, Eswatini. There are always many questions and in-depth dialogue.

As a result, over time these groups learn and accept new health ideas and share these with their families. In more modern and westernised cultures, health decision-making is seen as an

individual choice; one can believe what they wish to about their health and the health care that is available to them. In Eswatini, the individual makes their own choices, but this may be more greatly influenced by the collective community or family-based decisions to change practices or start new ones for their overall wellbeing.

This image depicts a group from the community sitting under a tree, about

to learn about COVID-19 vaccinations from St Philip's health clinic nurse, David. Throughout his time he has introduced thousands of people to HIV counselling and care, and is now working hard to reach remote communities and teach correct information with the hope of dispelling any circulating myths that could threaten lives. Health education in a pandemic may be more challenging, but it is still possible!

PROJECT SIHAT PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT – EXPANDING TO THE MILDURA REGION

At the same time as opening Clinic Sihat, we also launched Project Sihat Mildura – an initiative to respond to the mental health needs of people seeking asylum and other temporary visa holders in regional areas, through the employment of culturally-appropriate psychosocial support caseworkers.

Our Project Sihat caseworkers are employed from the communities that they work in, and are embedded in local organisations. They are supported by our specialist mental health clinical team to provide a holistic response to psychosocial

issues for people seeking asylum, vulnerable temporary visa holders and undocumented migrants.

In Shepparton, this work has been done in partnership with Uniting Vic Tas, with the worker commencing

in November last year. Now, in partnership with Catholic Care, we have commenced the same project in the Mildura region, where our newest psychosocial support caseworker has commenced work. Stay tuned!

ON A MISSION: HOW THE HUB IS EDUCATING CLIENTS ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

Ever since the COVID-19 vaccine became available to the Victorian public, it has been more important than ever that whole communities are offered easy and accessible pathways to receive the vaccine.

However for communities who may be culturally or linguistically diverse, communicating key information about the vaccine program has been difficult, as the government has been inconsistent with its messaging and there are many myths and misconceptions about the COVID-19 vaccines. These issues around communication have meant that often there is hesitancy around the vaccine, and for people who want it, it can be difficult to navigate how and where to book. Adding to the complexity is that some of our clients don't have Medicare or identification.

In response to this, Cabrini Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Hub has established a project to reach out to clients seeking asylum with translated resources to support them to make informed decisions about the vaccine and to assist with booking appointments. Our refugee health nurses have been working to understand and bridge the gap in communication and misinformation by spending extra time with clients during their consultations, calling them between appointments and posting information. This has involved sharing educational videos, engaging in interactive discussions with interpreters, and addressing any concerns they might have with the vaccine. Clients are then encouraged to speak with their GPs if they have major hesitations, or are guided through the process of booking a vaccine appointment.

Since the beginning of this education program, clients have been better able to understand how COVID-19 can affect their community, families and themselves, and empowered them to make better decisions for the health and safety of their community. This additional work would not have been possible without the generous support of the Victorian Government through the Priority Response to Multicultural Communities during Coronavirus (PRMC) program.



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OUTREACH

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\$ _____

My donation is:

Once off Monthly

My payment details are:

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Card number: _____

Expires: / _____

Card holder name: _____

Signature: _____

OR, Enclosed cheque/money order payable to Cabrini Outreach

Please contact me about leaving gift in my Will to Cabrini Outreach.

Phone: _____

Please direct my donation to:

My details are:

Title: First name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Suburb/Town: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

MEET *Maymun!*

We're pleased to introduce you to Maymun, one of our Refugee Health Nurses at the Cabrini Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Hub in Brunswick.



Maymun at the Cabrini Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Hub

Maymun started working at Cabrini Outreach in 2018, with a wealth of knowledge and experience under her belt. We recently asked her about her experience working with Cabrini Outreach, this is what she had to say:

"My name is Maymun and I am one of the practice nurses at Cabrini Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Hub. Here we provide primary health care to clients who are seeking asylum in Australia through nursing, general practice, allied health and specialist mental health services. Previous to this role, I worked in emergency medicine, as well as in other community health roles. I have a Master of Public Health degree which has supported me greatly in this role, and which has given me a much better understanding of how social determinants of health impact our clients and their health care experience in Australia.

By far, the most rewarding aspect of my job at the Hub is the safe environment that we provide for our clients, particularly for those who may have had traumatic experiences in the past. I feel a deep sense of gratitude that I am able to help our clients feel that their physical and mental health is prioritised and taken care of in a safe and compassionate manner."

CAUSES AND CAMPAIGNS

Action for Afghanistan

Australia is home to the fourth largest population of Afghans outside of Afghanistan. Over the past few weeks we have witnessed the devastating situation unfolding in their country, with the Taliban taking full control. At Cabrini Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Services, we work with many Afghan clients – predominantly the persecuted Hazara ethnic group – who have fled the Taliban in the past. Arif Hussein and Zaki Haidari accurately phrased it in the Sydney Morning Herald, when he wrote:

"They face an uncertain future because they are on temporary protection visas, despite the Australian government finding they are indeed refugees, and despite having lived here for more than eight years... [They] have lost loved ones while waiting for their family reunion application to be processed."

If you are asking yourself what you can do to help, you can write to your local MP and call on the Australian government to offer a one-off humanitarian intake of the most vulnerable people in Afghanistan, grant permanent protection to Australia's current refugees from Afghanistan, and enable them to reunite with their families. Learn more at

www.actionforafghanistan.com.au

May all those impacted by the situation in Afghanistan, including the loved ones of the people we work with, remain in our thoughts and prayers.



#TimeForAHome

July 19th 2021 marked exactly eight long years since the announcement was made that people seeking asylum who arrive by boat 'will never be settled in Australia'.

Since that day in 2013, thousands of men, women and children have lived in debilitating states of uncertainty in offshore detention on either Nauru or Papua New Guinea. They have experienced significant physical and mental trauma, and have been denied access to work, education and even necessary healthcare.

Over the years, some have been brought to Australia when their need for medical treatment became acute and urgent. Many of these people remain either in detention or are on highly restrictive bridging visas without a certain future. Some have been offered the option to resettle in the United States, but this process has been slow and difficult. Many remain in limbo.

At Cabrini Outreach Asylum Seeker Health Services, our team provides care to many people who are impacted by this policy. We support a compassionate approach, and believe that we simply must provide safety and a permanent home to all those still waiting after eight years too long.

Listen with your ears and with your hearts. Join us and take action at timeforahome.com.au



www.cabrinioutreach.com.au