

Media Release – For immediate publication

A new dimension in addressing domestic and family violence

20 November 2017 - Brisbane South PHN is today announcing a new front-line training for primary health care professionals to help address domestic and family violence in the region.

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.

Federal Member for Forde Bert van Manen, who will officially launch the program today, said that *Recognise, Respond, Refer* helps contribute to the Australian Government's strategy to reduce the levels of domestic violence in Australia.

"For many victims contact with a General Practitioner (GP) or healthcare professional is often their only link to community-based services. Enhancing practitioner knowledge of the issue can improve the response, provide early intervention and potentially save lives."

"Domestic and family violence has been identified as a priority area for intervention by Brisbane South PHN research," Sue Scheinpflug, CEO, Brisbane South PHN stated. "By engaging GPs and primary health care professionals we are adding a new dimension to how we address this often hidden issue."

"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 will play in this area."

In addition, the program will fund a resource to provide support services to GPs who refer patients experiencing domestic abuse. This resource will provide a vital link role between the general practices participating in the program and specialist community domestic and family violence services.

Central Queensland University, Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research will roll out the training to a minimum of 70 general practices in the first two years. The training will be implemented at locations across the entire Brisbane South PHN region, including the Redland Bay Islands, from early 2018.

"As the state's only dedicated provider of domestic and family violence research and education we are very excited to be implementing the training for this leading-edge program," Director of CQUniversity's Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research, Associate Professor Annabel Taylor said. "It has the capacity to make a real difference in the community and provide tangible support for those experiencing domestic or family abuse."

The program launch will take place today, Monday 20 November 2017, at 11am, at the Beenleigh Neighbourhood Centre, 10-12 James Street, Beenleigh.

This is a timely announcement leading up to White Ribbon Day on November 25th, the internationally recognised day of action calling upon all Australians to stand up, speak out and act to stop men's violence against women.

Federal Member for Forde, Bert van Manen and Federal Member for Griffith, Terri Butler; Dr Peter Adkins – Clinical Lead, Brisbane South PHN and members of the Brisbane South PHN Leadership team will attend the launch, and all media is invited. Morning tea will be provided.

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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