



**Merri Health**  
Healthcare that moves with you

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# Research + Innovation

Volume 12. June 2018

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 Merri-Health

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 Merri Health



# Welcome

Our commitment to health care isn't restricted to providing services. We pride ourselves on being an active participant and contributor to undertaking research and evaluation.

Research and Innovation is Merri Health's bi-annual publication that highlights some of our recent and current achievements in the areas of research and evaluation.

By conducting ongoing reviews of our programs and services, we ensure that they are based on best practice, are evidence-based and aligned to the population health needs of our community.

Research and Innovation highlights current research and provides the opportunity to identify new opportunities for collaboration, share our learnings and contribute to evidence base for population health and wellbeing.

In this edition you will find information on our recent health and wellbeing festival, our population health team's work in Fawkner, and our new services that are having a positive impact on our community.

This newsletter is aimed at current and potential partners, stakeholders, funding bodies and key players in the community, health and primary care field, such as the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Ageing, academic institutions, Medicare Local, Primary Care Partnerships and other community health organisations.

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## Improving access for all

### New phone number to streamline access to services.

Following feedback from our clients and partners, we replaced individual site contact numbers with one, easy number.

This move will help us streamline access to our services as clients will only need to remember one number, regardless of which service or site they access.

We considered the needs of our community and involved them in the process from beginning to end, to ensure that the navigation system was easy to understand.

The navigation system is in plain English and language friendly, allowing callers to easily connect to OnCall Interpreters to assist with their enquiry, if needed.

This move comes following the launch of our new website last year, which is compliant to Level A of the Web content accessibility guidelines version 2.0.



*You can now call 1300 63774 4 (MERRI H) and chose from the options to take you to the right service, person or team faster.*

Callers can choose from the following:

**Press 1** for dental services

**Press 2** for National Disability Insurance Scheme, disability and mental health services

**Press 3** for aged services, if you are 65 years or older, or an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 50 years or older

**Press 4** for health services, such as physiotherapy, exercise physiology, occupational therapy, podiatry, exercise and education classes, diabetes education, nursing and more

**Press 5** for child, youth and family services

For all other enquiries, carer services, an interpreter or to speak to someone, callers will be asked to hold the line, which will be answered by our reception staff.

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## Meet Moosh

The friendly monster helping young people learn about healthy eating.

Merri Health has developed its first app to help young people learn about healthy eating and a balanced diet.

Co-designed with Merri Health dietitian Julie Lew, the population health team, marketing and communications, Coburg Primary School and app and design creatives, Moosh is an app aiming to educate young people about healthy eating; balance, sugar and portions, as a fun, accessible game.

Local statistics and experience working with our community, shows there is still a need for education around healthy food choices.

The app seeks to address this, with pre- and post-game data being collected from grade 3 and 4 students at Coburg Primary School, in addition to other young people across our catchment who have committed to providing feedback.

For the purpose of the prototype, testing is coupled with classroom education, which allows us to collect anecdotal

information about their understanding and experience playing the game.

Data collection is key, with quantitative and qualitative data being collected through classroom, face-to-face and electronic feedback. This data will help us improve the quality of the game, to ensure that the learning components are relevant.

Moosh will be rolled out as mobile app available on iOS and Android devices.



Play the game and provide feedback



<https://monster-moosh.firebaseio.com>



[Communications@merrihealth.org.au](mailto:Communications@merrihealth.org.au)

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# Co-design leads to greater support for young carers

CarerLinks North's young carer group program underwent a refresh to better support the needs of young carers living in the northern metropolitan region.

The co-design process had led to a more relevant program that responds to their needs as carers.

One of the issues facing young carers was the lack of opportunities to socialise and attend extracurricular activities due to the impact of their caring role.

Since relaunching earlier this year, the program has helped 20 young carers to access regular respite in a youth-friendly environment.

As part of the program, young carers have participated in interactive workshops to empower and build capacity.

The program enables young people to foster positive peer relationships with others who have similar experiences.



▼  
Find out more about the young carer support program

📞 03 9495 0200

✉ CarerLinksNorth@merrilhealth.org.au

📺 Watch the young carer's video:  
<https://goo.gl/gxWPnc>



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## Building connections through sports participation

Twelve month evaluation of Count Me In reveals an increase in health and wellbeing levels of refugee and newly arrived families.

Sports participation program Count Me In, was found to be a catalyst for change on an individual and community level for health and wellbeing.

Since the program's inception, levels of health and wellbeing among culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children and their families have grown.

The program has supported families to get involved in physical activity as a way of helping them build on their social and support networks.

Results of the evaluation after the first 12 months, showed participation in Count Me In significantly increased resilience ( $p=0.047$ ) for the children, with a moderate positive correlation between resilience and wellbeing.

The program has not only played a role in driving health benefits, but in building community, confidence, resilience, social connection and cohesion.

Count Me In was able to improve the social network of participants, with children reporting that they felt there were people they could seek support or help from outside the home.

A social network mapping exercise found there was a decrease in children reporting that they had 'no-one' that they could talk to about things important to them.

Alongside support for children, a badminton program was established in Fawkner and Oak Park for women and girls exclusively, to provide a culturally-safe space for those who did not feel comfortable playing sport in a mixed-gender environment.

Count Me In has supported CALD families in Moreland and Hume since September 2016, engaging and linking 277 children and youth from 165 families into mainstream local sports clubs.

Count Me In is a partnership project between Moreland Council, The University of Melbourne and Merri Health and was the recipient of the 2017 VicHealth Award for Building Health through Sports.



## Phone coaching in tongues

Culturally appropriate service leads to better health outcomes.

Culturally appropriate phone-based support has been introduced by cardiac and respiratory support program to cater for the diverse local community.

Hospital Admission Risk Program (HARP) Complex Care recruited Greek and Italian patients who experienced an acute coronary event or intervention, to receive coaching over the phone in their specific language by a nurse or dietitian.

Providing targeted, culturally appropriate secondary prevention intervention through dietary advice (which had a greater focus on a Mediterranean diet) and education, the program was able to achieve 5–10% body weight loss over a six month period.

In people with type 2 diabetes, weight loss of 5–10% was associated with significant improvements in cardiovascular disease risk factors at one year, with benefits increasing with further weight loss, particularly in patients with obesity.

Phone coaching for secondary prevention is used in many Australian hospitals and has been proven to improve control of modifiable cardiac risk factors such as high blood pressure and cholesterol, being overweight, smoking status and physical inactivity.

The program was adopted to the Greek and Italian population, as it was recognised that non-English speaking patients are disadvantaged in accessing cardiac rehabilitation programs as they perceive health, and respond to health care services and information, differently.

HARP Complex Care is a partnership between Royal Melbourne Hospital, Merri Health, cohealth and Bolton Clarke. The program provides specialist treatment, education and support for people with chronic and complex health issues to manage independently in the community and reduce the risk of being admitted to hospital.



### Get in touch

*To read the full report*

 <https://goo.gl/VVxqf3>

*For referrals and questions*

 (03) 8387 2333

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## Focus on back pain

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General Practitioners benefit from education session focused on supporting patients with low back pain.

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Senior musculoskeletal physiotherapist Yashwant Rathi, has been involved in developing the back pain pathway for referrers via HealthPathways Melbourne. HealthPathways provides clinicians with a single website to access clinical referral pathways and resources in the local health system.

HealthPathways Melbourne is a collaborative program run by the Eastern Melbourne PHN (EMPHN), and North Western Melbourne PHN (NWMPHN) and local hospitals and health providers.

The program was a finalist in the National Medicinewise Awards.



Find out more about what we're doing for clients with back pain

 1300 637 744

 [info@merrhealth.org.au](mailto:info@merrhealth.org.au)

Merri Health senior musculoskeletal physiotherapist, Yashwant Rathi, presented at a recent General Practitioner (GP) education session aimed at strengthening confidence and skills in assessing and managing acute and chronic low back pain.

While back pain is the most widespread musculoskeletal condition and a leading cause of disability around the world, many GPs lack the confidence to provide treatment and advice to sufferers of back pain.

'Taking the pain out of low back pain' discussed non-surgical and non-pharmacological management of back pain and recognised the role of allied health professionals.

Yashwant Rathi presented on physical examination for low back pain, aimed at helping GPs understand and interpret assessment findings including neurological and provocation examination.

As part of his talk, he led an interactive workshop on '4-minute back examination' providing the opportunity to practice and structure a quick, efficient and comprehensive low back pain physical examination.

GPs also heard from Royal Melbourne Hospital consultant rheumatologist Dr Joi Moi.

Each session was designed to provide interactive plenaries and practical workshops steered by subject matter experts.

'Taking the pain out of low back pain' was hosted by the North Western Melbourne PHN, in collaboration with Royal Melbourne Hospital and Merri Health.

## Support to keep you moving

New reablement service aimed to help older people get back to being active with short-term health intervention.

Older people will receive support to achieve their short-term functional goals through a new reablement service.

The service will help clients return to their previous level of function and help them recover from an injury with a particular goal in mind, such as walk to the supermarket.

Merri Health specialist multidisciplinary program team leader Thomas Gauci, said that older people would benefit from the program, which provides intensive, short-term allied health interventions to help them regain lost skills and function.

“Reablement is underpinned by a strong evidence-base, with research citing its positive benefits. A client will have access to a number of health services delivered in a multidisciplinary way for six to eight weeks, supporting them to get active again,” Thomas said.

The reablement service will link clients with health services that will meet their needs, provide access to physical therapy and help coordinate their care.

This services was introduced as an important component of the

Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) funding for our aged care population.

Reablement is currently being implemented within the assessment space (Regional Assessment Service) and the service provision space.

This service is offered at our Coburg, Fawkner, Glenroy and Brunswick sites, or in the community.

Interested clients and referrers can access this service via a referral to My Aged Care with Merri Health as the preferred provider.



### Get in touch

*For questions*

 1300 637 744

 [Service.Access@merrihealth.org.au](mailto:Service.Access@merrihealth.org.au)

*For referrals*

 1800 200 422

 [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)



## Teeth for life

A collaborative approach to managing diabetes and oral health.



Merri Health’s dental and diabetes education teams are collaborating to help diabetes sufferers manage the chronic condition and their oral health.

People with any form of diabetes are at a greater risk of developing further dental complications because of their condition.


‘Teeth for Life’ will help clients manage their oral health and diabetes by providing an individual assessment and treatment plan.

A key part of ‘Teeth for life’ is the preventative oral health and diabetic education that participants will receive, prior to receiving dental treatment.

This is aimed at improving patients ability to self-manage their diabetes and reduce their risk of developing oral health problems, leading to health outcomes, reduced pain and improved function.



Find out more about ‘Teeth for Life’

 1300 637 744

 [info@merrihealth.org.au](mailto:info@merrihealth.org.au)



## Putting a stop to elder abuse

Local organisations working together to improve responses to suspected elder abuse.

Following the findings of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, local elder abuse prevention networks will be established across the country to improve support and response to suspected elder abuse.

The elder abuse prevention networks will comprise of agencies and community organisations who will meet regularly to work on key objectives such as developing interagency protocols and raising awareness of elder abuse.

This network forms part of the Victorian Governments integrated model of care to respond to suspected elder abuse.

The integrated model of care aims to strengthen elder abuse responses and support within Victorian health services by creating multiple entry points for older people and their carers and families to access specialist support services to address suspected elder abuse.

Merri Health will lead the Northern Metropolitan Elder Abuse Prevention Network, which will launch on June 14, the day before World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

### What we know:

- > There are unique characteristics of family violence experienced by an older person, which warrant particular attention and a tailored response.
- > It was found that in most cases, elder abuse is an intergenerational form of family violence.
- > In 2016-17, people aged 60 years or over made up just over 5,400 of the family members affected in family violence incidents recorded by Victoria Police.

### Brunswick

11 Glenlyon Road  
Brunswick VIC 3056

### Brunswick West PAG

382–386 Moreland Road  
Brunswick West VIC 3055

### Fawkner

79 Jukes Road  
Fawkner VIC 3060

### Thornbury

298 Victoria Road  
Thornbury VIC 3073

### Chifley Drive, Preston

Level 2, 110 Chifley Drive  
Preston VIC 3072

### Coburg

93 Bell Street  
Coburg VIC 3058

### Merri Central

Ground floor, unit 4  
19 Pentridge Boulevard  
Coburg VIC 3058

### Glenroy

5D Cromwell Street  
Glenroy VIC 3046

### Victoria Street, Coburg

21 Victoria Street  
Coburg VIC 3058

Contact us: 1300 MERRI H [63774 4]

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