

## Grey, Christine W (DHHS)

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**From:** Hill, Kathy (DHHS)  
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**To:** One Health System (DHHS)  
**Subject:** Submission

I was present at the public forum in Burnie on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015 and a few things came to mind during the discussions that I wanted to document.

- When speaking about the quality of the Tasmanian health system, the high percentage of chronic conditions, particularly in the northwest, was cited. Chronic health conditions are not necessarily a reflection of the quality of the health system but rather the socio-economic status and education system. We see examples of this frequently within the hospital system and as it perpetuates through generations it is not only our adult population but also our paediatric clients exhibiting disturbing chronic conditions.
- As a result of the abovementioned features of our population, health education and prevention of diseases is important for the future of the health system. I was heartened to hear this point made during the presentation.
- Although Tasmania is geographically a small island it is not easy to traverse. Distances have no correlation to travelling time and for that reason a commute from the northwest to Hobart to attend a medical appointment would entail an overnight stay. A reliable, frequent train service would solve some problems but I doubt that is in the plans for the near future. At NWRH we have accommodation units available for minimal cost to patients and their relatives and perhaps this is a solution for Hobart and Launceston to ease the burden of travel. However, it won't alleviate the problem of family or friends needing time off work to accompany their loved one. Some form of compensation from employers or government may be in order in the form of Carers leave.
- On the subject of travel, I was pleased to hear the acknowledgement that clinicians can travel to the various health centres in some instances. We have many specialist clinicians who travel to the northwest from Melbourne, Hobart and Launceston and the clinics are well attended.
- Telehealth clinics would certainly be the answer to the problems associated with distance. In 2013, NWRH conducted a Telehealth pilot project. It was very successful, winning the Innovation Award for Leadership New Ways of Working (see link) but wasn't continued due to lack of funding.  
[http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/about\\_the\\_department/innovation\\_awards/2013\\_winners](http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/about_the_department/innovation_awards/2013_winners)
- It makes perfect sense to treat patients in "centres of excellence" where numbers for specific surgeries are greater under the assumption that there will be a higher quality and therefore better outcomes. It is important, however, to maintain the standards of care in other centres to deal with post operative complications. Things to consider include the period of time the patient is to remain in the area of treatment, the accommodation requirements, family support and the financial implications of these considerations.
- On 27<sup>th</sup> November 2012, the northwest region "went live" with Digital Medical Records, enabling access to patient records around the state. Unfortunately, Launceston General Hospital declined to be part of this initiative. This has made it very difficult and almost impossible at times to access patient information from LGH. This has impacted on patients as their appointments have to be rescheduled until that information, usually test results, can be obtained. Access to patient information across the whole state is imperative to enable efficiency within the system.

I look forward to being a part of the new improved health system and the positive impact it will have on our community.

Regards

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