



# Culture Connect

Welcome to Culture Connect  
– keeping you updated and informed about the Culture Review Implementation across the ACT public health system.

## Message from the Minister

Our health system has been doing an amazing job of responding to the recent COVID-19 outbreak and keeping our community safe and informed. Throughout this challenging period, I've seen firsthand the commitment and dedication of our workforce in delivering healthcare to the community. Across the public health system, individuals and teams have been coming together to support Canberrans.

I want to thank all our staff for their ongoing contribution and tireless work, we appreciate everything you are doing.

I would like to reiterate our commitment to you about creating an environment where our workforce feels supported, valued and empowered to deliver exceptional healthcare. We cannot provide the services we do without you and we want to ensure where you work is the best it can be.



Minister for Health,  
Rachel Stephen-Smith

## Culture in action

Across the system, there's some great work happening on the ground. In this issue, we're focusing on initiatives across Canberra Health Services that support a thriving culture.

### Empowering nurses and midwives with Green Buddies



CHS has recently launched Green Buddies, a new program to support the wellbeing of nursing and midwifery staff in the Women, Youth and Children division. Developed by clinical staff, the initiative has trained 12 inaugural volunteer Buddies to support the wellbeing of their colleagues.

Buddies are identified on the wards by a special green badge, where they're available to help with emotional and professional concerns, from how to fill out a timesheet correctly to managing issues in their personal life that may be impacting on their work.

The training provides Buddies with the tools to guide and connect staff with relevant information and appropriate support resources and services.

### Supporting Junior Medical Officers with Blue Buddies

A mentor program aimed at supporting Junior Medical Officers (JMOs) has been rolled out across CHS.

Blue Buddies are informal near-to-peer mentors who help JMOs with advice and guidance. This could cover a debriefing after a difficult event, information on managing work life balance, or strategies for applying to training programs.

The Blue Buddies mentors are all Medical Officers, drawing on their own experience to provide trusted advice and support. They're found on the ward by their distinctive blue coloured name badge.



## CHS implements IMEC



In August 2020, CHS rolled

out the Improving Medical Engagement and Culture Strategy (IMEC) to better connect with the medical profession, ensuring their voices are heard and valued. The strategy includes four priority areas, drawn directly from medical officer feedback following the 2019 Workplace Culture Survey:

1. Promote a safe and collegiate workplace
2. Improve communication with medical officers
3. Promote a medical voice in organisational decision-making and high-level committees
4. Ensure equitable workloads.

Key to the strategy is regular engagement with Medical Officers to inform and consult on issues and initiatives. This includes monthly Medical Officer Webinar and Q&A sessions presented by the Executive Director of Medical Services (EDMS) and the circulation of an EDMS Fortnightly Post.

To help guide the development and implementation of IMEC, the Clinical Directors Forum was also put in place in August 2020. Chaired by the EDMS, the Forum was created to break down silos across CHS by bringing together medical practitioners for the common good of CHS staff and patients. The Forum also provides advice and feedback to the CHS CEO and Executive.

## Pulling together for the community

During the most recent COVID-19 outbreak, our people have been going above and beyond, working together for the health and wellbeing of the Canberra community.

Many of our staff have changed roles, taken up shifts at testing or vaccination clinics and volunteered to come out of retirement to work in our organisations during the outbreak. Time and time again, we're seeing examples of people stepping up to help where they can.

That's people like the testing and pathology staff, who have been working around the clock to test record numbers of Canberrans. The communications team has been working all hours in response to government announcements, keeping the public informed with trusted information every day.

And the COVID-19 vaccine booking team recently hit a huge milestone – booking 100,000 Canberrans for their first COVID-19 vaccination appointment in a record breaking 59 days.

But it's not just us who appreciate their efforts. Take a read of some of the messages from the public praising the incredible work of our people.

“Thank you to all the staff but a big shout out to the staff who have been redeployed to help out.

Great team, great service to the community, much appreciated.

Huge thank you to the vaccination team keeping us safe, good job.

Thank you to all these amazing people. Tirelessly helping us – YOU ROCK! ”



## New mental health support resources now available for health professionals

With the evolving COVID19 outbreaks across the country, vaccine demands and public health orders, health professionals are faced with less time and fewer opportunities to support their mental health.

That's why The Essential Network for health professionals (TEN) resources have been introduced to complement the support already in place for ACT public health system staff.

TEN was developed by the Black Dog Institute, as part of the Australian Government's COVID-19 response. It's a free and confidential mental health hub that offers discrete and convenient access to mental health screening, resources and person-to-person support. For more visit

[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/the-essential-network/](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/the-essential-network/)

## Want more?

Visit [www.health.act.gov.au/culture-review-implementation](http://www.health.act.gov.au/culture-review-implementation)  
or email [ourculture@act.gov.au](mailto:ourculture@act.gov.au)