

# The “Well Connected” Skype Project

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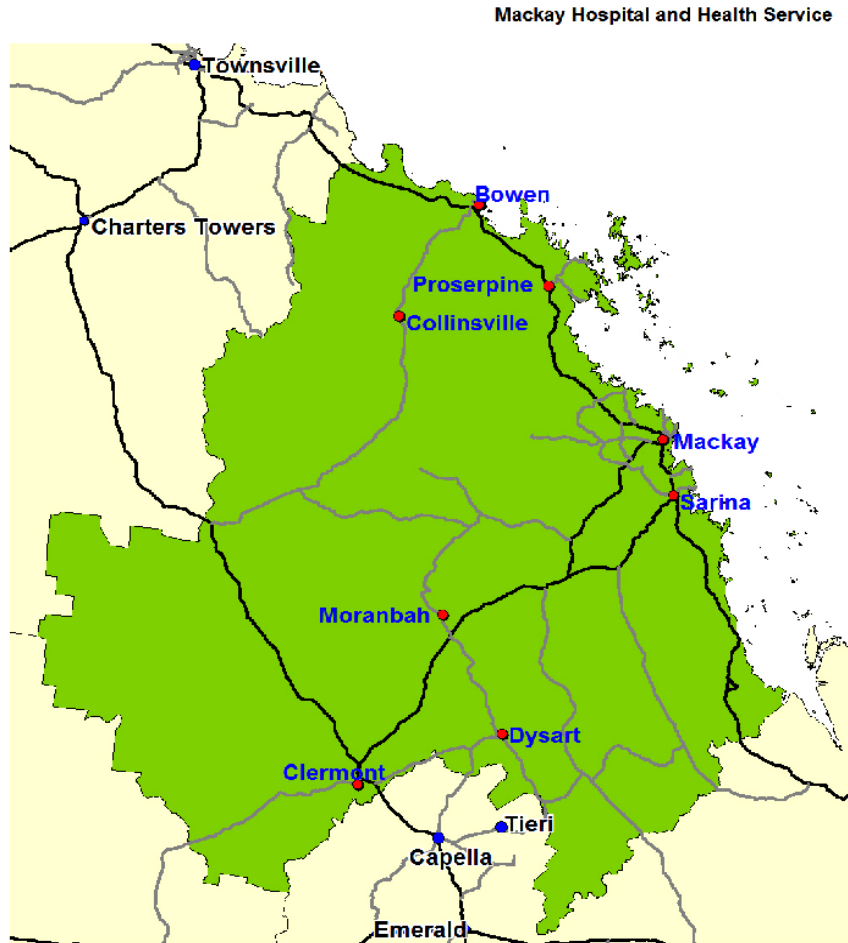
Presented by  
Nancy Brennan & Mark Blattman  
Social Workers from  
Mackay Hospital & Health Service

# Where are we located?

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- The Mackay Hospital and Health Service is 1000 klms North of Brisbane and is responsible for the delivery of public hospital and health services including medical, surgical, emergency, obstetrics, paediatrics, specialist outpatient clinics, mental health, critical care and clinical support services to a population of around 180,424 people residing in a geographical area from Bowen in the North to St Lawrence in the south and from the coast inland to Clermont in the west, Bowen in the north and Collinsville in the north-west. The Whitsunday Islands in the east are also included in this region and include Lindeman, Hamilton and Brampton Islands.

# Mackay Health Hospital Service District



# Why?

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- A unique aspect of life in the Mackay Health Service District is that a large percentage of the population work away from home on a regular basis due to the employment requirement of the district's mining and rural industries.
- The “Well Connected” project opens new and exciting avenues for patient support and the evidence suggests that treating teams should identify the patient's key supports, and enhance their level of involvement in order to maximise patient outcomes.
- The “Well Connected” project will also support patients with loved ones serving military postings overseas as armed forces personal serving overseas are provided with access to Skype facilities.

# How?

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- Through funding from the Mackay Hospital Foundation, Allied Health's, Social Work Service is kicking off a new project called "Well Connected", using Skype to help connect hospital patients with family members and friends who are unable to visit in person.
- The "Well Connected" project was launched on World Social Work Day (20th March 2012) and is available across the Mackay Hospital & Health Service.

# QI Activity

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- *“Video calling in the hospital has removed both geographical, and in this case, physical barriers by allowing patients who can’t leave the hospital to have face-to-face conversations.”*
- *“Skype video calling has helped the healing process among many patients by eliminating a sense of isolation that patients sometimes feel.”*
- *“By having access to Skype enabled laptops, patients are able to reach out and talk to family and friends, whenever they are feeling lonely”.*

# skype™ Well Connected

*Keeping patients connected with family members and friends*



Queensland Government



Through funding from the Mackay Hospital Foundation, the Allied Health Social Work Department has introduced a new incentive "Well Connected". This program allows patients to Skype video and voice calls that allow patients to get in contact with loved ones. Video calling in the hospital means that:

- Patients feel more at ease and supported therefore more able to focus on their recovery.
- Patients remain in contact with family and friends who are unable to visit in person.
- Reduces isolation for patients
- Maintaining contact in adverse weather events such as Flooding or Cyclones

If you require more information, please contact your ward Social Worker or call Nancy Young, Social Work Dept Allied Health 4885 6277

*The Well Connected project has been kicked off on World Social Work Day (20<sup>th</sup> March 2012)*

# Skype to keep patients close to family, friends

A NEW project at Mackay Base Hospital will keep patients connected with family members and friends through Skype.

Through funding from the Mackay Hospital Foundation, the Allied Health Social Work Unit is beginning a new project, 'Well Connected'.

Mackay Base Hospital social worker and project manager of Well Connected Nancy Young said Skype would allow patients to connect to family and friends who were unable to visit.

"The sense of isolation in hospital is minimised using this technology, and patients feel more at ease during their stay with us," she said.

"We would like to thank the Mackay Hospital Foundation for funding this project.

"Maintaining access to support networks can be limited due to the size of the Mackay Health Service District, especially when patients are transferred from outlying district hospitals for treatment and family members are unable to temporarily relocate or maintain a regular visiting schedule.

"The Skype video and voice calling program will be available



**NETWORKING:** Angus and Summer Murray at the children's ward, Mackay Base Hospital, use Skype to talk to their grandmother in Scotland.  
PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

soon at Mackay Base Hospital. Using a laptop computer with Skype software delivered to the bedside, selected patients will be able to video chat with family and friends around the globe."

Mackay Hospital Foundation manager Mayte Sanchez said the project showed the effect of community donations was being felt locally. "The Mackay Hospital Foundation directs community generosity to

where it matters most to enhance health and wellbeing where we live," she said.

For details phone the Mackay Hospital Foundation on 4855 6777 or visit [mackayhospitalfoundation.com.au](http://mackayhospitalfoundation.com.au).



# Promoting its use

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- <http://blogs.skype.com/play/2010/06/hospital-video-calling.html>



Nashota, a 9 year old in intensive care, uses Skype to connect with her twin sister Nahimana who's unable to visit her in her room.

# Skype provides additional support for home dialysis patients

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- ❑ Increasing number of patients choosing home haemodialysis due to the tyranny of distance.
- ❑ Until recently standard support consisted of regular telephone contact and home visits
- ❑ Introduction of Skype allows:
  - More comprehensive support
  - Improved level of communication
  - Direct visualisation of the patient, machine and environment
  - Facilitates quick & effective trouble shooting
  - Reduces cost to patient and service provider
  - Improves patient outcomes
  - A more efficient service delivery model allows for re-allocation of resources



# Patient Empowerment for...

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- Elderly patient starting home haemodialysis
- Living 2 hours+ from unit
- Those already using Skype
- Consent to using Skype as home dialysis support



# Setting up Skype

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- Not possible to use Skype on Qld Health network
- Concerns about confidentiality and viruses
- Local Kidney Patient's Association agreed to fund project
- Bought laptop/tablet with camera and helped install Skype
- Unable to use hospital phone lines so separate BT line was installed



# Potential uses of Renal Skype

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## **Support for patients**

- Needling
- Machine problems/alarms
- Problems with circuitry
- Experiential assessment
- Encouragement and reassurance, reduction of anxiety
- Environmentally friendly

# Needling

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# Problem Solving

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# Ensuring patient safety

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# Partnering with your dialysis machine

“we can see that hammer in your hand”

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# Evaluation

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- Saves miles and time!
- Reassuring for staff to be able to see patient, machine and environment

## **Patient comments**

- DK 'Like having a nurse at home with me'
- EH 'Reassuring when someone can see what you are trying to explain'
- AW 'Oh it is brilliant! It is like having your own private nurse'
- 'Saves money'



# Impact on patient efficacy

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- **Instant problem solving, nurse can see what is happening**
- **Reassuring – patient feels that the nurse can see what they are doing and that they are not alone**
- **Empowers them to be independent and gives confidence, especially when they first start at home**

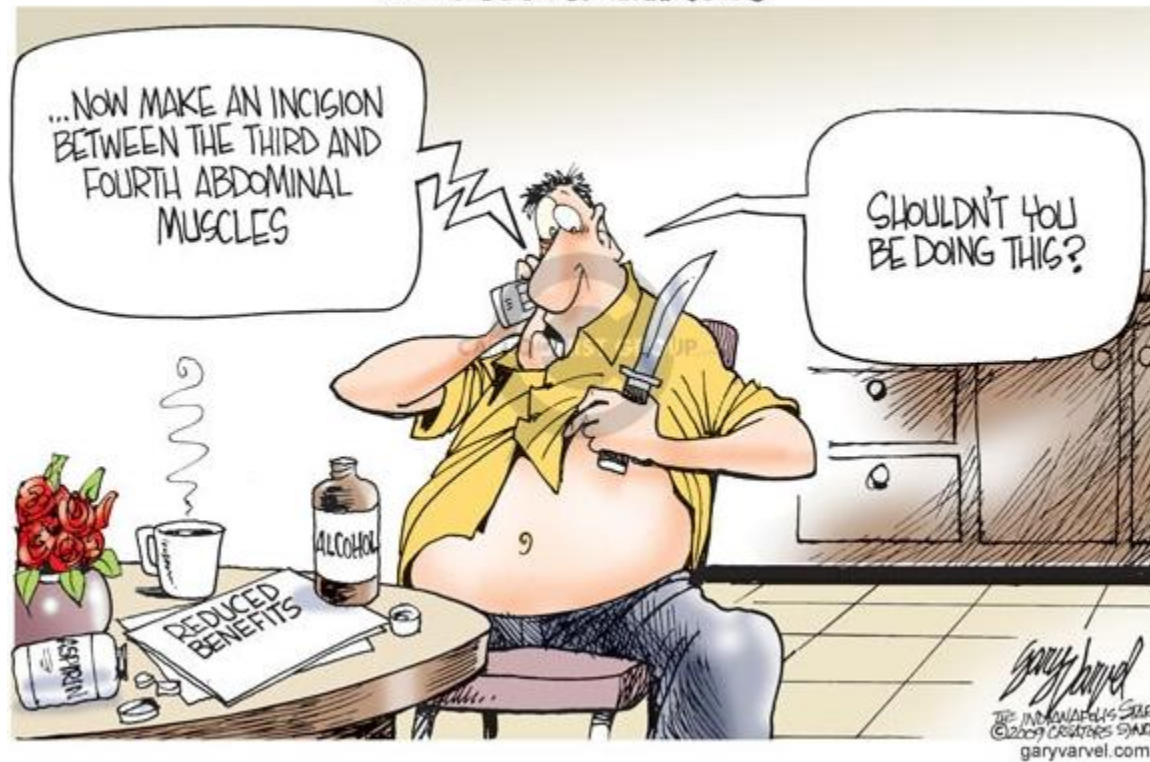


# Future potential

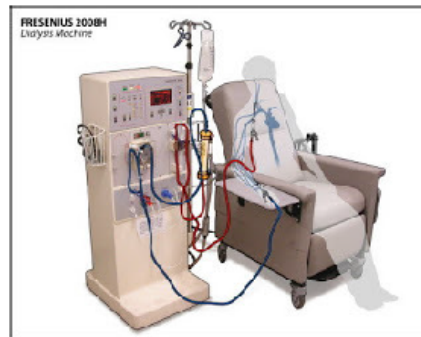
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- Provide equipment for patients who are unable to fund their own.
- Explore possibility of connection via other programs
- Set up and maintenance costs provided by a national communication carrier and organisations such as Kidney Health Australia
- Skype applications now available on smart phones
- Skype can be built into the dialysis machine and also automatically monitor machine function which can be remotely assessed by dialysis staff.
- Data base of patient problems and solutions
- Research project potential

## Universal Health Care



# ***“EX-TER-MIN-ATE, EX-TER-MIN-ATE”***



Improving the relationship with your  
Dialysis Machine.

The Dialysis Patient Journey in Pictures:

“Denial”



“Anger”



“Bargaining”



“Depression”



“Acceptance”



“Just Wrong”



# Reference List

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  - Lauria, M.M., Clark, E.J., Hermann, J.F., Stearns, N.M. (2001). *Social Work in Oncology: Supporting survivors, families, and caregivers*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society.
  - National Breast Cancer Centre and National Cancer Control Initiative. (2003). *Clinical practice guidelines for the psychosocial care of adults with cancer*. Camperdown, NSW. National Breast Cancer Centre.
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  - LINKS:
  - [http://www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/corporate/QHstratplan2007\\_2012/QHStratPlan07\\_12.pdf](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/corporate/QHstratplan2007_2012/QHStratPlan07_12.pdf).
  - <http://blogs.skype.com/play/2010/06/hospital-video-calling.html>
  - <http://www.ucsf.edu/news/2010/04/4399/ucsf-partners-skype-connect-patients-family-friends>
  - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_detailpage&v=WqwedOvdGs4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=WqwedOvdGs4)
  - <http://www.wickedlocal.com/hanson/news/x2146873000/Brockton-Internet-birth-signals-growing-use-of-technology-in-the-delivery-room#axzz1RBv3c0d9>



# Links to and promotional material and testimonials

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- **1. UCSF Promotional Video**  
□ [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_detailpage&v=WqwedOvdGs4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=WqwedOvdGs4)
- **2. Providence Hospital sets up SKYPE for moms on bed rest (news video)**  
□ <http://www.kgw.com/video/featured-videos/Providence-Hospital-sets-up-SKYPE-for-moms-on-bed-rest-80079862.html>
- **3. Video calling at the UCSF Children's Hospital**  
□ <http://blogs.skype.com/play/2010/06/hospital-video-calling.html>
- **4. UCSF partners with Skype to connect patients with family & friends**  
□ <http://www.ucsf.edu/news/2010/04/4399/ucsf-partners-skype-connect-patients-family-friends>
- **5. Brockton Internet birth signals growing use of technology in the delivery room**  
□ <http://www.wickedlocal.com/hanson/news/x2146873000/Brockton-Internet-birth-signals-growing-use-of-technology-in-the-delivery-room#axzz1RBv3c0d9>