



LET'S OPERATE WITH RESPECT



Metro
South
Health

MEDIA RELEASE

RACS and Metro South Health commit to respect in surgery

28 July 2016

Metro South Health, Queensland and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to deal more effectively with reports of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment (DBSH) in the surgical workplace, and to improve patient safety.

“Hospital wards, operating theatres and outpatients are where surgical education and health service employment overlap,” said RACS Vice President, Professor Spencer Beasley.

“It makes sense for employers and educators to look for new ways to improve the experience of Surgical Trainees, make hospitals a better and safer place to work, and improve patient safety,” he said.

“Research shows that bad behaviour has a negative influence on the whole team and not just the people to which it is directed. This MOU is an important step that will improve patient safety by improving the work environment,” Professor. Beasley said.

“Metro South Health strongly believes that every employee has the right to work in an environment free from any form of bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination,” said Dr Susan O’Dwyer, Executive Director, Medical Services for Metro South Health.

“As an organisation, we have a leadership role to ensure the principles which promote a workplace free from harassment are integrated into everyday practice. We believe that a safe and supportive work environment not only benefits our staff, but also delivers better outcomes for our patients.”

“Our partnership with RACS will strengthen the existing supportive culture within our surgical teams and provide a solid framework to promptly address any issues if they occur,” Dr O’Dwyer said.

The MoU commits both agencies to a shared vision to provide high quality training, education and experience in the practice of surgery. Specific initiatives include:

- aligning or developing policies and processes to deal with DBSH using the ‘Vanderbilt Principles’ as a foundation (See appendix two in the [RACS Action Plan: Building Respect, Improving Patient Safety](#));
- ensuring that complaints about discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment involving Trainees, International Medical Graduates or RACS Fellows employed at Metro South Health are

Media inquiries:

Greg Meyer
Manager, RACS Communications
& Advocacy department
Mob: 0429 028 933
Nicole Newton: +61 407 998 611

Aaron Cameron
Media and Communications
Metro South Health
Tel: 07 3156 4989



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managed fairly and expeditiously and that the outcomes of complaints are shared within an agreed framework;

- ensuring that surgical supervisors have the necessary skills and attributes and support to provide high quality training, assessment, feedback and support to Trainees and International Medical Graduates without engaging in DBSH. This will also involve the sharing of information and resources for training programs to address DBSH.

Collaborating with employers to build respect in surgery is one of RACS' core commitments in its [Action Plan: Building Respect, Improving Patient Safety](#).

This MoU with Metro South Health is the first RACS has established with a regional health network in Queensland and the latest in a series of agreements with hospitals and other agencies in healthcare, which employ surgeons or oversee health systems.

The Action Plan is the cornerstone of RACS' response to the recommendations of the 2015 Expert Advisory Group into DBSH in the practice of surgery.

In May 2016, RACS launched [Let's Operate With Respect](#) – a campaign to help deal effectively with discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in surgery. RACS has also published a dedicated new section of its website, About Respect.

About RACS

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

www.surgeons.org

About Metro South Health

Metro South Health is the major provider of public health services, health education and research for the Brisbane South, Logan, Redlands, and Scenic Rim regions. The health service employs more than 13,000 staff who provide specialist health care to a population of more than one million people, 23 per cent of Queensland's population. It operates five major hospitals (Princess Alexandra, QEII Jubilee, Logan, Redland and Beaudesert) in addition to a large number of community health centres throughout the region.

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