

Issue number 4: Hospital admissions, planned and emergency, for people with Type 1 are managed poorly when a team is not involved

The team at Royal Darwin Hospital, which includes endocrinologists, nurse educators and one Aboriginal health worker, actively review all hospital admissions and provide assessment and review for all people admitted with Type 1. This includes medical, surgical and paediatric admissions. Policies have been developed between the different units within the hospital to support this proactive practice. There are still gaps for people booked for elective surgical admissions and the referral systems to improve timeliness of review for these patients are being revised. This process has not yet been established at other regional hospitals.

The NT has had to develop a range of strategies to provide high quality care across a widely dispersed area. We would support further initiatives to extend access to specialist advice through internet and phone based support.

Multidisciplinary clinics for children are provided at both Darwin Private Hospital and Royal Darwin Hospital, which includes the paediatricians, nutritionists and nurse educators. A visiting paediatric endocrinologist collaborates with these clinics.

Issue number 1: Access to specialist medical advice is very limited, especially in rural and regional areas

Most of the physicians in the Northern Territory work as general physicians, with sub speciality support from their local or interstate colleagues. We have three Darwin based endocrinologists with expertise in Type 1 Diabetes. They provide advice and support for their physician and GP colleagues across the Top End through individual consultations, regional outreach visits and telephone advice. A visiting endocrinologist supports the physicians and GPs in Alice Springs.

Thank you for your letter to Hon Kon Vatskalis, Minister for Health. On his behalf I would like to provide you with information as to what is happening in the Northern Territory with respect to the issues in your statement.

RE: A Statement of issues affecting Australians with Type 1 Diabetes

Dear Ms Gilbert

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Issue number 5: System for the essential monitoring of Type 1 is inefficient and highly ineffective

The NT has introduced a Shared Electronic Health Record, which captures essential medical information from a range of computerised patient record systems including hospital records, pathology records, pharmacy records and primary care records. To date, 66% of the Aboriginal population in remote areas of the Northern Territory has consented to have their essential medical records shared with relevant health professionals. Registration has commenced in Darwin General Practices, and the process is ongoing across the NT. This Shared Electronic Health Record enables health professionals to review all relevant records for the person and should contribute to improved chronic disease management.

Issue number 6: Adolescence and young adulthood is a critical stage with the worst outcomes

The paediatricians, physicians, nurse educators and nutritionists provide "Transition" clinics for adolescents and young adults at Royal Darwin Hospital, which allows the young person to decide the timing of "transition" from paediatric to adult medicine. The educators and nutritionists work with both children and adults providing further continuity of care.

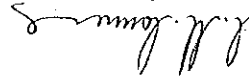
Issue number 8: Training teachers and schools about the basic needs of children with Type 1 occurs haphazardly

Integrating education on Type 1 for teachers is an important issue. The educators at Healthy Living NT are funded to provide support and advice for teachers. The school of an individual child will be provided with information at the time of diagnosis, and on an annual visit. A new resource for teachers developed by Australia (Victoria) is proving valuable. The educators also provide phone support with some visits to regional centres.

Issue number 9: Peer learning opportunities for people with Type 1 are essential but very limited and difficult to access

Healthy Living NT facilitates quarterly family fun gatherings in Darwin for children with Type 1 and their families. This provides opportunities for children and adults to develop relationships and share information in an informal setting. Between 10-40% of diagnosed children attend these gatherings. Adults with Type 1 are invited to participate on an annual basis, which provides a further opportunity for parents to develop an understanding of how their child will live with Type 1 as an adult. The visiting paediatric endocrinologist provides an annual education session for families.

Yours sincerely



Dr Christine Connors