



PRESS RELEASE

No: 271/2018

Date: 16 May 2018

Well Person Unit at PCC to Include Comprehensive Sexual Health Service

While the Ministry of Health and the Gibraltar Health Authority are constantly seeking ways to improve Gibraltar's health services, we also strive to find areas and gaps in healthcare provision where new services may be introduced to benefit our community. One of those services is that of providing a comprehensive Sexual Health service to provide a confidential, non-judgmental service. This new centralised service is to allow patients access to an experienced and professional source of advice to help them make informed choices for their family planning.

There is no doubt that this key service is very much needed and the GHA are dedicated to providing the best level and quality of service in this respect. As such, this service will be launched as part of an overall Well Person Unit, which will also include Well Man and Well Woman services to improve health and wellbeing in our community. The Well Person Unit will open during Sexual Health Week in September 2018.

A very experienced expert in the field and local GP has been engaged to establish the new service. Her role will be to work with all local services and bring their expertise together in this one Unit. Advice and guidance will be sought from the Education Department and local schools and youth groups to create teaching programs for young people to help them make balanced and informed future life choices. The direction of the Director of Public Health, the Health Promotion Department and Infection Control Departments have guided the Unit's core services based on their own long and considered experience. The Nursing Department will advise on staffing and daily operational needs.

Many challenges have been encountered in the background work for this service, in particular, proposing and designing a Unit that deals in a difficult and sensitive area of medicine. Persons requiring any of these services will be attending the 'Well Person Unit' at the Primary Care Centre, which encompasses various Clinics, including; Well Man and Well Woman Screening Clinics, as well as Sexual Health and Family Planning. This means that any person attending can do so knowing that their presence within the Unit will not indicate the reasons for their visit. In addition to this, meticulous consideration was taken concerning processing of test results. The anonymisation of

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test requests and results means only the GHA's Medical Director, the Deputy Medical Director and a patient's clinician will be able to identify the name of the patient in question.

Sexual health is a state of physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction, or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

Director of Primary Care, Dr Krishna Rawal commented: "This is a service that has been long awaited, much discussed and extensively planned. The support of Minister Costa has been the pivotal point that has turned this idea in to a reality and for that I am hugely grateful. The benefit to our community will be enormous, not only straight away but as an investment in our families, our youth and our future. I would like to personally thank my excellent Clinical Nurse Manager Suzanne Romero who has dedicated so many hours to this amazing project and whose expertise and experience have been invaluable."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP said: "The creation of this Unit will be one of the best examples of the collaboration between patient groups and clinicians. For Gibraltar, this will be an entirely new service, but many of the elements are already being provided at separate locations and by different teams. To bring them together will create a comprehensive and streamlined service that will develop and grow, and fill a well -needed gap in our health care provision. I am truly grateful to all of our highly dedicated health professionals who have been involved in the creation of this important service, and have succeeded in overcoming various challenges along the way. Mr Nathan Lightbody and Ms Sandra Netto of the Infection Control Unit, members of the Health Promotion Unit, the Hospital Pharmacy, the Prescribing Unit and the Pathology Department, along with the Youth Services and Department of Education have all contributed towards this project. I wish to sincerely thank them all for their excellent work."