

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

From: Kasey McCulloch, Media Officer, Mercy Health

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Specialist diabetes clinic supports pregnant women

World Health Day is marked on the 7 April each year and in 2016 the focus is on diabetes. About 350 million people worldwide have diabetes and this figure is expected to double in the next 20 years.

This year's World Health Day campaign is particularly important for the city of Wyndham which has one of the highest incidences of diabetes in Victoria.

Werribee Mercy Hospital Diabetes Educator Linda Jackson said diabetes is a healthcare burden which requires careful future service planning for diabetes health needs to be met.

"Werribee Mercy Hospital averages more than 3000 births per year and approximately 16 per cent of women birthing at the hospital will develop Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM)," explained Ms Jackson.

GDM is a condition in which women without previously diagnosed diabetes exhibit high blood glucose (blood sugar) levels during pregnancy. It generally has few symptoms and will typically disappear after the baby is born. If left untreated GDM can lead to a large baby, increasing the mother's risk of needing a caesarean section. The baby can also experience problems immediately after birth due to low blood glucose levels.

"Currently five GDM information groups are held each fortnight at the hospital to support women to manage the condition and ensure the best outcome for both mother and baby," said Ms Jackson.

With demand for birthing services growing, Werribee Mercy Hospital has also set up a specialist medical outpatient clinic to manage pregnant women with pre-existing GDM, Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes or other endocrine conditions such as thyroid disease.

Ms Jackson said the Endocrinology in Pregnancy Clinic is a multidisciplinary clinic which is staffed by specialist medical doctors (endocrinologists and obstetricians), a diabetes nurse educator, a dietician and a midwife.

"The clinic allows patients to see two or three health professionals in the one sitting, rather than having to attend multiple individual visits on different days."

Sarah, a patient at the clinic, said she thinks it is a great concept for busy mums and mums-to-be.

"All of the staff make me feel positive about living with diabetes and work as a team to ensure the best outcome for my baby and I," said Sarah.

The clinic is available to all women who have been accepted to birth at Werribee Mercy Hospital.

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For interviews and photo opportunities, please contact:

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