

Home Dialysis Update

A triannual newsletter published by The HOME Network
Edition 12 — July 2021



Welcome to the twelfth edition of *Home Dialysis Update*, our newsletter from The HOME Network

By Josephine Chow, Chairperson



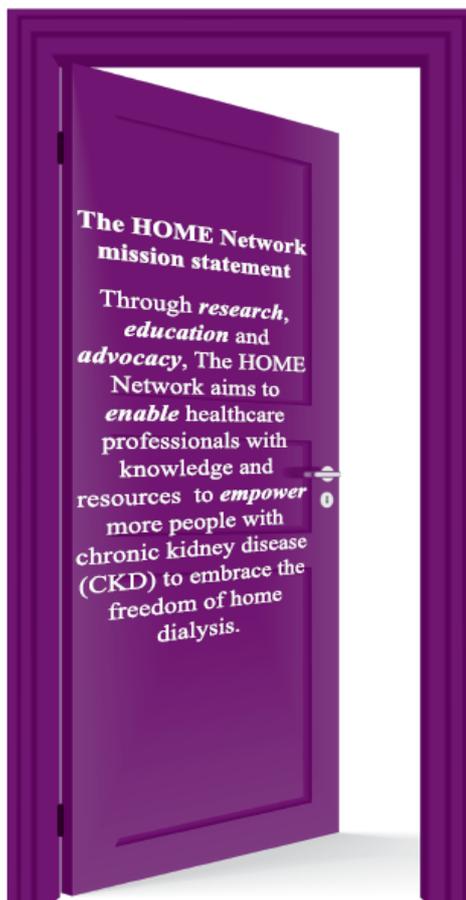
As the entire world comes to grips with the “new normal” coronavirus has wrought onto our cities and communities, we all face the challenge of figuring out how to talk about the impact the virus is having on our everyday lives. I have no idea how we have managed to strive a number of initiatives! *In this edition*, you will find out more about our milestones with the TEACH-PD trial, the virtual RSA Conference, and, some of the early responses from our work with home dialysis nurses to help us understand and share their insights into the impact of coronavirus on home dialysis.

Yes, we are calling for more THN members: Find out how you can be part of the team to facilitate a positive change towards increased uptake of home dialysis.

Coronavirus has led to an explosion of new words and phrases such as “self-isolating”, “pandemic”, “quarantine”, “lockdown”, “stay-at-home order” and of course “you are on mute”. The past 18 months has made us more flexible than we ever could have imagined! I look forward to seeing you online and hopefully face-to-face in the not too distant future.

The HOME Network: who are we?

By Josephine Chow, Chairperson



The HOME Network (THN) is a national initiative that brings together a solution-focused group of home dialysis healthcare professionals from across Australia & New Zealand (ANZ). The group draws upon all levels of evidence to provide insights and practical options for colleagues throughout ANZ to facilitate a positive change towards increased uptake of home dialysis.

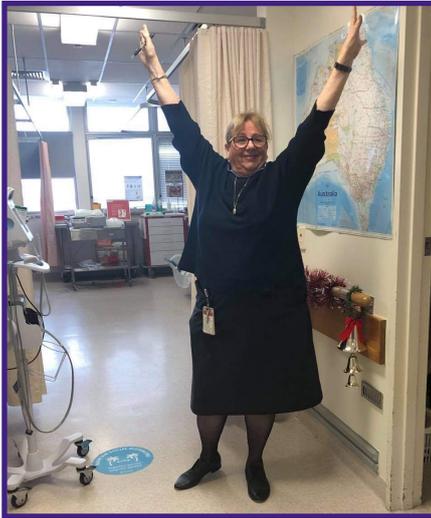
Since its establishment in 2009, THN has had considerable successes in developing resources for patients and healthcare professionals in line with its objectives and making optimal use of members’ time available to commit to projects.

The vision and mission of THN is to identify solutions and strategies to promote and enhance home dialysis. Members are committed to driving outcomes aligned with the group’s strategy and working towards achieving our overall mission statement: “*Through research, education and advocacy, The HOME Network aims to enable healthcare professionals with knowledge and resources to empower more people with chronic kidney disease to embrace the freedom of home dialysis*”.

The HOME Network has been working within three focus areas:

- **Healthcare Professional Education:** Improved awareness, knowledge and training about home dialysis for healthcare professionals.
- **Patient Factors:** Targeted action that enables healthcare professionals to address factors impacting on the ability of Australians with CKD to embrace the freedom of home dialysis.
- **Technology and new initiatives:** Support for new initiatives and technologies that strengthen home dialysis utilisation as part of establishing flexible and innovative models of care that strengthen support for people on home dialysis as well as their carers.

Working in these three focus areas is part of our continuing campaign to drive increased uptake of home dialysis across ANZ as we work together to keep pushing for world class home dialysis care for our patients.



Member Profile

Hello from Far North Queensland!

Name: Keri Equinox

What is your role and where are you from?

I work as a Clinical Nurse Consultant in the Home Therapies Unit at the Cairns Hospital. I am a born and bred Far North Queenslander.

I have worked in the Home Haemodialysis Unit for 20-odd years and enjoy the rewards that come with sending patients back to their families rather than seeing these patients relocate to Cairns for dialysis.

The Cairns Hospital not only services our catchment area but also provides Home Therapies training to the Cape York and Torres Straits Health regions.



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Our catchment area is the size of one Victoria and two Tasmanias combined. This large area gives the Home Therapies nurses not only the opportunity to visit remote areas of Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands (that one would not usually visit), but it also presents us with logistical challenges for coordinating patient care.

How long have you been with The HOME Network?

I have been a member of The HOME Network since its inception. I am very proud to be part of such a dynamic group of dedicated professionals and also being able to give The HOME Network a Far North Queensland perspective.

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Join The HOME Network



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Expressions of Interest closes 31 July 2021

The HOME Network (THN) is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from motivated renal nurses, renal allied health workers, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders and/or Māori health care workers within both Australia and New Zealand to join THN as a member.

Responsibilities of a THN Member:

- Committed to meetings via Zoom
- Committed to driving outcomes aligned with THN's Strategies & Priorities
- Committed to achieving THN's overall vision and Mission Statement
- Attend the annual THN workshops (virtual and in person when COVID-19 restrictions ease)
- Work effectively as a team member, contributing positively to team operations and working relationships

Candidates should meet the following criteria:

Minimum requirements:

Previous experience working in Renal Dialysis, Peritoneal or Home Haemodialysis.

Desirable requirements:

Have experience and/or knowledge with Green Dialysis.

We encourage nurses, allied health and health care workers who have experience working with Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders and/or Māori communities to apply.

How to Apply?

To express your interest to be a member of this dynamic network, please complete and email the Expression of Interest Form for Membership and a copy of your Curriculum Vitae (including two professional referees), to Professor Josephine Chow, Chair of THN, by *COB, 31 July 2021*.

For enquiries and further information, please contact Professor Josephine Chow at: Josephine.chow@health.nsw.gov.au or access our website, <http://www.homenetwork.net.au/>



Impact of COVID-19 on Home Dialysis — A Survey for Nurses

Between April to June 2021, The HOME Network invited Home Dialysis Nurses to participate in a survey to help us understand and share their insights about the impact of COVID-19 on home dialysis.

The questions we wanted to test were:

- "The COVID-19 pandemic has little impact on patients who do home dialysis (because they dialyse at home)";
- "The COVID-19 pandemic is driving increased DEMAND for home dialysis options".

To date, we received a total of 47 respondents, with 21 (46%) from Australia and 54% from the rest of the world—majority from Canada. Fifty-four percent of the respondents reported that they did not have a telehealth program prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and over 61% have since implemented a telehealth program.

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents reported that they observed an increase in enquiries/discussions about home dialysis options and/or an increased participation in pre-dialysis education about home dialysis options.

The major challenge encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic was the safe delivery of supplies to patients' homes as the delivery drivers were unable to enter their residences and, as a consequence, patients struggled to move their supplies from their home's front door to their storage room.



In addition to the above survey, we also sought in-depth narratives on the following:

How did Your Home Training Unit Manage During the COVID-19 Pandemic, and How Is It Managing Now?

Princess Alexandra Hospital, Brisbane, Queensland

by Janine Byrne

Our Home Haemodialysis Training Unit's attention and efforts were focused on supporting patients to remain at home. We structured our disaster management plan to avoid inpatient admissions, social respite dialysis and conversion to hospital dialysis. Our patients were provided with ongoing support and care through additional telephone contact, and, information newsletters regarding COVID-19 and emotional wellbeing.

The dialysis equipment in the home was scheduled for biomedical technical preventative maintenance to avoid equipment failure and possible hospital dialysis. Home water quality management was continued as per our usual practice, however, routine home visits were reduced and scrutinised for appropriateness.

Outpatient appointment capacity was restricted with only crucial patients being seen face-to-face utilising safe social distancing practices. All other medical outpatient appointments were converted to telephone consultations.

Wellness screening was performed on patients, carers and staff prior to entry into the locked training unit, and only people actively involved with the training process were allowed access.

As a Unit we are fortunate to have never been exposed to COVID-19. Our patients and families have reported they felt well-informed and supported throughout this stressful time; however, they did also report experiencing fear, anxiety, isolation and loneliness whilst continuing their dialysis treatments at home.

Our unit data for the 2020 Annual Report demonstrated no change from the previous year in patient outcomes. At present, patients are happy with the proposed continuation of outpatient phone consultations.

How did Your Home Training Unit Manage During the COVID-19 Pandemic, and How Is It Managing Now?

(cont'd...)

Renal Home Therapies Unit – South Western Sydney Local Health District, NSW

By Susana San Miguel

Peritoneal Dialysis (PD)

PD Clinics only offered for new catheter flushes and peritonitis management. Meanwhile, Telehealth was introduced. Line change, Adequacy and PET was suspended for eight months. For the purpose of social distancing, clinic rooms occupancy was reduced by one.

PD training was initially only for one patient at one time. However, the acquisition of addition training room in the new clinical building allowed for the accommodation of four patients training with two staff.

Home visits were essentially only for first dialysis at home, otherwise it was via telehealth: the patients were contacted by phone.

Haemodialysis (HD)

Training space for HD was reduced for the purpose of social distancing. Use of single rooms to train patients.

HD home visits were essentially for first haemodialysis at home and troubleshooting, otherwise it was via a telephone consultation only. Regular Access flow measurements were suspended, unless the patient was having access issues.

Staggered entry times was introduced for patients coming into the unit so as to avoid congregating in the reception area. Patients are screened for COVID-19 symptoms before coming into the unit. Hand hygiene practiced by patients coming in for dialysis. Usual PPE for staff.

To accommodate the increase in patient numbers wishing to go home, we have utilised the services of *Dialysis Australia* for the Assisted Home Haemodialysis (AHHD) program. This can only apply to the patients who are privately insured (Medibank Private) or be DVA eligible.

Monthly Blood tests: As the patients did not want to go out (even though they could for medical reasons), arrangements were made for pathology lab couriers to pick-up their blood samples and deliver to the pathology laboratory. Patients took their own blood using blood tubes and request forms provided by us, placed the blood tubes into the esky provided by the pathology laboratory and then leave the esky outside their front door for collection. Patients contacted the pathology laboratory to arrange for courier pick-up several days beforehand.

Western Sydney & Nepean/Blue Mountains Local Health District, NSW

By Tanya Smolonogov

Haemodialysis and Peritoneal Dialysis patients were placed into categories. The management of these patients was divided into:

- * Management of patients prior to upcoming scheduled dialysis
- * Inbound transport considerations
- * Inbound waiting room management
- * Management during scheduled haemodialysis
- * Outbound patient movement and transport

PD Clinics were restricted to urgent and essential visits (suspected peritonitis, exit site infection, catheter blockage and training). Telehealth was utilised in the PD/HD/Renal Outpatient Clinics. Pre-Dialysis Education continued with screening and social distancing in place, and telehealth was also utilised. Group education days were placed on hold, and are still on hold.

We are currently in the process of making educational treatment options via audio/visual content for patients. Staff-education and meetings were conducted using online platforms, with face-to-face meetings limited in numbers thus maintaining social distancing.



At The HOME Network, we aim to increase HCP networking and to share some of the novel ways in which we as healthcare professionals are making a difference for our CKD patients. Often, there are fantastic projects underway locally that we believe deserve a national platform for sharing.

Help us by sharing your ideas and ways in which you are supporting your CKD patients to choose the home dialysis option! Please email the editor at news@homenetwork.net.au to share your big idea. We will publish a selection of great ideas in each newsletter. Please include your contact details so that colleagues may get in touch to learn more.

And... stay tuned for more news about how we plan to support the sharing of ideas in the future!

TEACH-PD Update - A Targeted Education Approach to improve Peritoneal Dialysis Outcomes Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial (TEACH-PD CRCT)

Co-Principal Investigator: Professor Josephine Chow & Professor Neil Boudville

Lead - THN Healthcare Professional Education Group: Melinda Tomlins

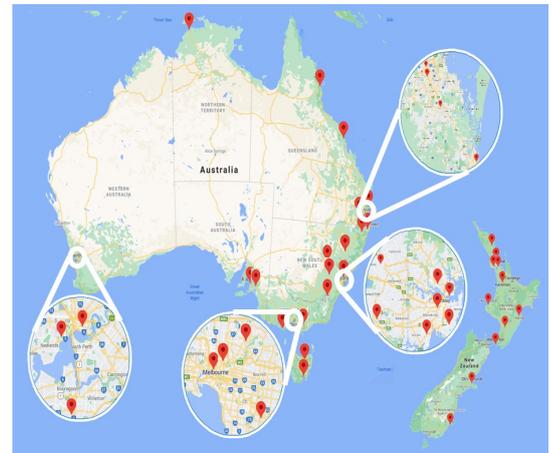


Target: 44 PD Sites

1500 Participants

38 sites randomised (27 AUS, 11 NZ)

33 sites are active and recruiting



We are soon closing Sites Recruitment. Please contact us if your PD Unit would like to join the TEACH-PD Trial.

The HOME Network Telehealth & Remote Monitoring Start-up Tool Kit (THN TERMS)

In early 2019 THN and the associate telehealth experts set up THN TERMS, a start up toolkit to support any renal professional by providing guidance and process to assist those looking to undertake a renal telehealth program or research project. This is by no mean an exhaustive resource and is a work in progress. The toolkit has been recently refreshed and it consists of the following components which can be accessible via the THN Website.

<http://www.homenetwork.net.au/>

TOOL KIT COMPONENTS:

- * LITERATURE REVIEW
- * PROJECT SCAN
- * RENAL APPS SCAN
- * PROJECT_SCHEDULE_TEMPLATE (GANNT CHART)
- * ON_BOARDING_PROCESS_FLOW
- * OFF_BOARDING_PROCESS_FLOW
- * COMPLIANCE AND STANDARDS
- * SCAN OF TELEHEALTH VENDORS
- * PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE

Diagnostic Definitions for PD Peritonitis and Exit Site Infection *Li et al, Perit. Dial. Int. 36: 481-508*

What do the ISPD Guidelines say?

PD Peritonitis:

At least 2 of the following are required:

- * Consistent clinical features i.e. abdominal pain +/- cloudy bag +/- fever.
- * Dialysate total white cell count $>100/\mu\text{L}$ (or $>0.1 \times 10^9/\text{L}$) after a **dwel of at least 2 hours** with $>50\%$ polymorphs.
- * Positive effluent culture.

Exit Site Infection (ESI):

Defined by the presence of purulent discharge with or without erythema of the skin at the catheter-skin interface.

Note: Positive cultures in the absence of abnormal appearance are indicative of colonisation only.

PD Tunnel Infection:

Defined as erythema, oedema and/or tenderness over the subcutaneous path of the catheter. It may be accompanied by purulent or bloody discharge either spontaneously or after pressure to the tunnel.



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By Rosie Simmonds

As most of you would be aware, the 2021 RSA Annual Conference planned for Melbourne 17-19 June was switched to a fully virtual event because of the COVID-19 situation in Melbourne and Victoria at the time. The Conference Organising Committee, the RSA Board and the Conference Organisers are to be commended for the amazing job they did, at such short notice, to turn the conference around to a full virtual conference format and to continue to provide an exceptional educational opportunity for all who attended.



It was certainly a new experience to listen to some wonderful presentations in the comfort of our own lounges, and I can assure you that my cat (Brian) equally enjoyed having me sitting glued to a screen for three days running! *And just quietly, I don't know if I'll ever physically attend an early morning breakfast session again; not if I can remain snuggled in bed and attend virtually!* All jokes aside, I was surprised at how engaging and easy to navigate I found the conference to be on a virtual platform.

Once again The HOME Network was well represented with a number of presentations and posters submitted by our members and associate members. Overall, there was a wide variety of talks and posters available ranging from regenerative medicine and the future of kidney disease treatment, to some wonderful presentations from the consumer perspective: all of which can help us focus and reflect in our own practice as we strive to provide the best outcomes that we possibly can for our patients.

You can still register for the 2021 RSA Annual Conference and will then have access to more than 60 oral presentations, 50 poster presentations and 4 workshops. Access is available until 16 August 2021.

Join The HOME Network as an associate member!

We hope that you enjoyed reading this edition of The HOME Network newsletter; it certainly is an exciting time for The HOME Network and home dialysis!

If you are not already an associate member, now is your chance to join us. New associate membership continues to grow as a result of our newsletter's accessibility. Feedback has been very positive and has greatly influenced as to how the newsletters are produced. *If you know of any colleagues who may be interested in reading our newsletter, please forward a copy and let them know how they too can join as an associate member.* As an associate member, you will receive our newsletters containing articles, information and advances in the field of home dialysis as well as information about upcoming events. This is also the first venue where you will learn about the commencement of any new projects, and is also *your* chance to get involved in a project that you feel passionate about. To join as an associate member, please use this link to enter your details:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SKX2TSD>

Please share this link with any healthcare professional who you think may also be interested to join us.

The HOME Network's website at www.homenetwork.net.au is where you need to go to find out about our past and current projects in this exciting area, not to mention that we have also added some great new resources and publications to this website. You can also email Josephine Chow (The HOME Network Chairperson) at contact@homenetwork.net.au for more information regarding The HOME Network and the group's activities.

If you have any news to share relevant to home dialysis, please email the editor at: news@homenetwork.net.au

Acknowledgements

The HOME Network would like to thank the following people for their time and input into the development of this edition of the *Home Dialysis Update* Newsletter: Dana Windebank, Janine Byrne, Jerome Pong, Josephine Chow, Keri Equinox, Lisa Capamagian, Neil Boudville, Rosie Simmonds, Susana San Miguel, Tanya Smolonogov and Walaa Saweirs.

We would also like to acknowledge our ongoing partnership with Kidney Health Australia, the Renal Society of Australasia, the Australasian Kidney Trials Network and My Chit Chat Time.