A love letter to my hospital

August 22, 2018 By Grace Campbell

Something struck me when I was at my specialist appointment this week. It was how fortunate I was to have a medical service that wrapped around me and worked to help me be the healthiest version of myself I could be.

There were two extra people in the room while I was seeing the gastro guy: someone on an internship and a 4th year medical student doing some research into hepatic encephalopathy. Did I mind, they asked. Not at all. As a teacher I'd always been happy to take students on their practicuums. How else do they learn if they don't have mentoring and the opportunity to try their skills out?

While the specialist was out of the room, they both asked me why I travelled so far to come to St Vincent's. I told them my old familiar story of being so sick way back in 2014, with such advanced liver dysfunction, that I needed treatment for my Hepatitis c urgently. And about how I'd approached St Vincent's.

I told them how my now-specialist Greg replied to a panicky email sent from some random woman in Tamworth (me) less than 12 hours after it was sent, offering hope when none had seemed likely.

I talked about how I was made to feel welcome when I walked in the door, nervous and scared.

I told them about my first appointment down there and how I felt after years of fear I had a path forward.

I said that what I valued most about IBAC was its commitment to bring health care to anyone who needed it. I spoke to them about how everyone is treated with the same level of respect and gets the same level of quality care. It doesn't matter who you are or what you do. Everyone matters.

Perhaps I paint a more rosy picture that the reality might be. As a faceless bureaucrat myself (just joking, a little) I know something of the challenges that any organisation faces behind the scenes to keep things operating smoothly. But I also know this: no matter what might happen behind the curtain, quality patient care and a commitment to equity of access drives IBAC and all who sail in it.

I also know that there is a whole team of people that can be relied upon to work together to help people like myself. To make my appointments and tests happen yesterday I needed two

specialists, pathology, a haematologist and numerous admin staff to work together. And they did. No siloing.

There may be many things wrong with our health care system, but there are many things that are right too.

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