

WHEN THE BALANDA SICKNESS COMES TO COMMUNITY, CONTINUING RESPITE DIALYSIS IN THE MIDST OF A COMMUNITY OUTBREAK.

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Background/Purpose:

Prior beliefs of the Yolngu population of Galiwin'ku, a remote community in East Arnhem was that COVID was a Balanda (Whitefella Sickness), Mob would be protected by God and their Faith which resulted in poor vaccination rates. In January 2022, Galiwin'ku experienced a COVID outbreak resulting in community lockdowns, isolation and medical evacuations for those most vulnerable to the Centre of National Resilience.

Approach:

This presentation shares the approach Purple House adopted to continue to operate their 2 chair respite dialysis unit in Galiwin'ku, keeping their mob safe/COVID free for as long as possible. This was achieved by engaging culturally safe and responsive approaches in language, acknowledging the importance of Religious belief, the Kinship system and the challenging socioeconomic factors of this remote community whilst adapting clinical practices and the work environment for close contacts and promoting COVID vaccinations. By increasing the workforce and deploying a Primary Health Care Clinician, health promotion and education could be facilitated in family groups, allowing for information sharing and "one true Dhawu (story)".

Outcomes/Impact:

Surveillance screening and modified clinical practices allowed for close contacts to remain in community and continue to receive treatment. Higher vaccination rates amongst the ESRF/dialysis population of Galiwin'ku resulted in less hospitalisations and long-COVID cases.

Innovation and Significance:

Community is at the heart of all our work and we refer to our clients as our Bungawas (Bosses), fostering an approach that is community focused and working in 2 ways; Yolngu and Balanda ensures respect and trust, or as we say at Purple House, doing things "the right way".

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None