



PRESS RELEASE

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Minister Costa delighted with positive response to new Matron Service introduced at GHA

The Gibraltar Health Authority has successfully reintroduced a modernised and clinically-reinforced matron role in order to raise clinical standards at St Bernard's Hospital and to enhance quality care to patients. The move has been widely welcomed by health users and professionals alike, as matrons play a key role in assisting the Clinical Nurse Managers to integrate a consolidated approach to best practices.

The two new matrons are Natasha Cerisola and Jolyn Gonzalez, who have been tasked with the responsibility of developing and maintaining GHA policies and protocols and to maintain high standards of care delivery across the board, along with patient safety and satisfaction in all areas of the GHA.

Other duties include ensuring that GHA rules are adhered by staff, mentoring staff, streamlining lines of communication with patients and the observance of high standards of hygiene and infection control procedures in wards. The Matrons will also oversee the systems of accountability and responsibility that govern the conduct and performance of nurses, providing professional guidance through changing working practices.

In terms of relations with the community, Matrons will listen to family concerns and act as advocates for patients and relatives, as strong and approachable figures with whom they can clearly identify. Other core functions will be to ensure that convalescing patients are nursed back to health in a comfortable environment and to coordinate the right plan of clinical care for their needs.

Historically, Matrons were highly respected figures with a 'hands-on' approach, who played an important role in the Gibraltar Health Authority. Although the position was discontinued in modern times, and its functions absorbed by the Nurse Management Team, the reintroduction of the position has been deemed desirable in order to improve our patients' experience.

Successful Matrons

Natasha Cerisola completed her studies as staff nurse in 2003 and worked in A&E until 2014, when



she was promoted to the position of Sister. She is an Adult Life Support instructor and recently completed an Advanced Trauma Nursing Course in London which provided valuable experience in Emergency Care.

Jolyn Gonzalez has been nursing for 17 years, having trained in England and gaining experience in Intensive Care and Coronary Care for five years before returning to Gibraltar. Previously the Sister at the ITU, she has worked there for the past 12 years. She completed a Masters in Critical Care last year.

Natasha said: "Old Matrons were very well respected and we feel honoured to be carrying the title again."

Jolyn said: "We can learn from all that is good from the past in order to improve clinical care in the present and look forward with confidence to the future."

Director for Nursing Services, Ms Sandie Gracia, added: "The reintroduction of the Matron role is a positive move in the right direction of providing a visible and accessible presence in the ward that will ensure that all clinical care provided is patient focused. Both Jolyn and Natasha's personalities, values and clinical experience, makes them exactly the right people to enable us all to see things through fresh eyes, and, most importantly, those of the patient."

For his part Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP said he was extremely pleased with the new Matron service at the hospital. Mr Costa said: "Our considered initiative to reintroduce the Matron at St Bernard's Hospital after a long absence has had a highly positive impact on the delivery of health care in the wards. It is already having a beneficial effect on the overall patient experience. The Government is proud of the manner in which we have been able to provide the foundations for career progression at the GHA, for training and development of staff in all areas. Gibraltar can be proud of having its health service, with magnificent professionals who are devoted to the needs and well-being of patients and performing a first class job for the community."