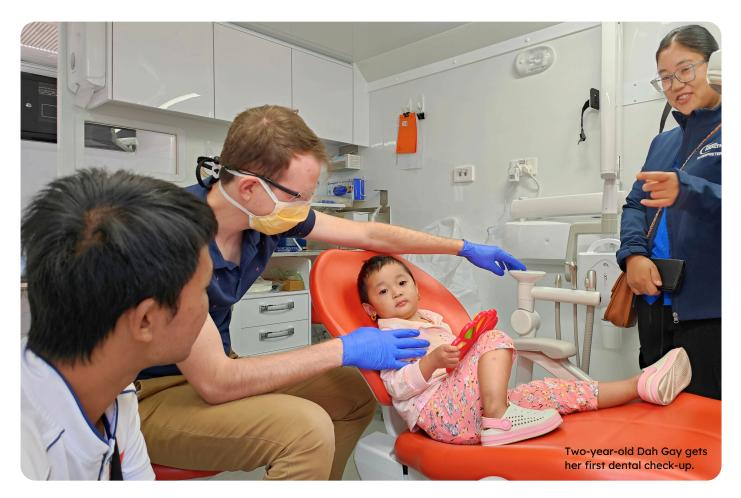


FEBRUARY 2025 NEWS

Bendigo | Eaglehawk | White Hills | Kangaroo Flat | Elmore



Dental van first



Trial creates access for refugee health

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- Our services, plus more.

It was all smiles in the Bendigo Community Health Services' carpark recently, as we worked with Bendigo Health to ensure people of refugee background received a vital first dental appointment. In an innovative trial, Bendigo Health's Dental Outreach Service made temporary use of a Smile Squad school dental van to make accessing care easier for our clients of refugee background.

BCHS refugee nurse Veronica Steegs said refugees get priority dental appointments at Bendigo Health, and this new collaboration was about strengthening and streamlining access to appointments.

"This has been a true collaboration," Veroncia said of the partnership. "It shows that we can work together and think outside the box.



Acknowledgement of Country

Bendigo Community Health Services acknowledge we live, work and enjoy Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country. We extend our appreciation to the Djaara and Taungurung peoples. We pay respect to Elders past and present for their continued holding of memories, traditions, culture and community aspirations. We recognise sovereignty has never been ceded and express our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of colonisation and their lasting impact. May we walk forward together in harmony and the spirit of healing. It was and always will be Aboriginal land.



We support people to develop and maintain their personal, gender, sexual, cultural religious and spiritual identity.

BCHS is proud of:





New year = new goals

I am so proud of what the team at BCHS achieved in 2024 as we celebrated 50 years of Community Health. We had an absolute blast at our Family Fun Day in November last year, and were so



pleased to celebrate with you, our community, and to have the Premier of Victoria, the Honourable Jacinta Allan MP, and newly elected local Councillors; Mayor Cr Andrea Metcalf, Deputy Mayor Cr Abhishek Awasthi (also a BCHS Board Director), Cr Thomas Prince and Cr Aaron Spong attend and join us. Our team are raring to go for 2025 and we will be actively delivering our strategic plan, which includes strengthening our connection with you. We can't wait to finish our 50 years of BCHS celebrations grandly with the opening of Eaglehawk mid-year!

Enjoy reading more from our team and take care.

Mandy Hutchinson

Partners in smiles

FROM PAGE 1

"Our clients need support – language support, support to get here and support understanding what a dentist

is. We're able to provide that



Veronica and Kristi are all smiles.

support, and Bendigo Health is able to provide the service.

"This is just amazing and if we can do it well, then other places might be able to implement the same thing as there's a lack of dental services, especially in regional areas."

During their time in the carpark, Bendigo Health's oral health therapist Dean and senior dental assistant Tara provided care to 53 people of refugee background.

Bendigo Health Community Dental Services coordinator Kristi Sheldon said the team was able to check in with all patients of refugee background who were awaiting an appointment.

"This has helped us get people off our waiting list and into the service," Kristi said. "We've been able to help a group of people that needs the help."

She said it's hoped visiting the van will also be an important step towards patients attending any follow-up appointments.

BCHS looks forward to welcoming the van back to the carpark in the next school holidays.





www.bchs.com.au

HOME BASE WORKS FORGE ON AHEAD

The BCHS Eaglehawk site refurbishment is powering ahead, with the external brickwork and windows now complete, well and truly bringing the 46-year-old site into the here and now.

Roof sheeting and glazing is also in place, revealing the beautiful impact of natural light on the internal spaces – check out the view of the historic Railway Station Hotel the tradies had from up high in the picture below.

February will see the site take a further step in sustainability, with solar panels to be re-installed.

Works are still on track for completion in the second quarter of 2025, after which we look forward to celebrating a launch with the community. Once complete the site will feature more usable space, state-of-the-art equipment, expanded services, dedicated community areas, plus a beautiful facade that will be backlit at night.

Long-time Eaglehawk staff are counting down to returning 'home' and new staff are looking forward to moving to a contemporary, fit-for-purpose building.

For a list of where to currently find services normally based at Eaglehawk, see page 4.



Next up for the Eaglehawk roof is solar panels being reinstalled.



Kidzspace renovations

We're not playing around when we say that we're excited to announce the improvement works to the Kidzspace area at Kangaroo Flat are about to start.

From mid-February builders from BLR Provincial Construction will be on site which may affect parking and usual access routes.

The focus of the works include:

- Reconfiguration of consult rooms and the reception space.
- Creation of more functional spaces for meetings and other group activities.
- Landscaping works in the lawn area at the centre of the building.

Please note, the playgroup room and outdoor play space at the front of the Kidzspace building will still be accessible during most of the project.

	1				1	
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 Lunar New Year Festival
2	3 smalltalk supported playgroup term 1 starts	4 World Cancer Day	5	6	7	8
9 Healthy Lunchbox Week starts	10	11	12	13	14 National Condom Day	15
16	17 Storytime @ Bendigo Library - 10.30am	18 Storytime @ Eaglehawk & Kangaroo Flat libraries - 10.30am	19	20	21 Storytime @ Heathcote Library - 9.30am	
Huntly Family Fun Day	24	25	26	27	28	

What's on in February...

Medical clinic opening hours

Bendigo Central includes our Sexual and Reproductive Health Hub

Address: 165-171 Hargreaves Street Phone: (03) 5406 1200 Email: <u>bchs@bchs.com.au</u> Monday-Thursday: 8am-5pm Friday: 8am-4.30pm Saturday/Sunday: Closed

Kangaroo Flat

Address: 19 Helm Street Phone: (03) 5406 1200 Email: <u>bchs@bchs.com.au</u> Monday-Thursday: 8am-5pm Friday: 8am-4.30pm Saturday/Sunday: Closed

BCHS' Eaglehawk services have moved to various temporary locations while we refurbish.

The medical practice has moved to 75 Mitchell Street, Bendigo. **Phone:** (03) 5406 1200 **Email:** <u>bchs@bchs.com.au</u> Monday-Thursday: 8am-5pm Friday: 8am-4.30pm Saturday/Sunday: Closed

The allied health services have moved to:

- Active Living Program & Physiotherapy 501A Napier Street, White Hills and 19 Helm Street, Kangaroo Flat
- Podiatry 19 Helm Street, Kangaroo Flat and 165–171 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo
- Forensic mental health 165-171 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo
- Chronic disease management 165-171 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo and 75 Mitchell Street, Bendigo
- Sexual health nurse 165–171 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo.



IN SERVICE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

This month Bendigo Community Health Services farewelled GP Dr Gary Bourke after 29 years of dedicated service.

Dr Bourke officially started with the service in January, 1996, however his association with community health began as a medical student, when he applied for a six-week nurse assistant role during university holidays. That was in 1980 – just six years after community health began in Bendigo. Gary said he could see it offered a different model of care.

"It was happy, it was friendly, even back then you could tell that it was a great team approach," he said.

Gary graduated from the University of Melbourne in 1983, then was "immediately thrown in the deep end" of the hospital system. Three years later he emerged with three GP specialist interests: obstetrics, anaesthetics and emergency.

He worked in the small Gippsland town of Foster for five years, where he and his musician wife Lynette grew their family of four kids, and their dreams to pursue volunteer work. "The more we looked into it, the more positive the idea became, so we chose to go to PNG," he said.

"I love what community health has done with me and for me."

Read our full story at bchs.com.au Gary became the doctor in a health centre with 80 patient beds in a small, isolated village on the edge of the jungle, "with no real connection to the outside world".

"I really learnt the community approach in PNG," he said. But the seeds were already there for Gary, who credits his background of growing up in Bendigo with fostering compassion.

In the decades to come Gary followed his interests to work in Aboriginal health, in hospitals, in private practice, and in teaching, with the University of Melbourne and Monash University. Throughout the development of his career, Gary also stuck with BCHS.

"I just loved it," he said. "And I would change the focus of my job every now and then."

He says being involved with BCHS' GP registrar program was a highlight, as was becoming a lead clinician in 2017 – a commitment that continued throughout the COVID years with weekly meetings to respond to the pandemic.

"I loved community health, and I love what community health has done with me and for me," he said. "There's a continuity of care, and a level of care that cannot be provided without the team approach."



Job vacancies

Senior Leader People and Culture

- Ongoing, 76 hours per fortnight (1.0 FTE)
- Applications close February 17.

We are seeking an experienced, compassionate person to lead the People and Culture team to deliver human resource management and payroll system services. This is a rare opportunity to join an outstanding team of community heroes at an exciting time of growth for our not-forprofit organisation.

Primary responsibilities include providing responsive and professional organisation-wide support, while assisting individuals and leaders with appropriate advice and guidance.

Independent Chair BCHS Board Oversight Committee

- Fixed term position, monthly or bi-monthly meetings
- Applications close February 24.

This role chairs meetings of the Board Oversight Committee to an agenda agreed with the committee and the Company Secretary.

The Chair is expected to model qualities of consultation, ethical and collegial decision-making, and to ensure that all committee decisions also reflect those qualities.

For more information visit the Careers page on <u>bchs.com.au</u>.

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

Rhonda Kirby

As an organisation with more than 50+ services, we'd really like to highlight the wonderful and hardworking people who work at Bendigo Community Health Services and what we can do for you, so welcome to Service Spotlight. If you see anything featured in here that you'd like more information about please email bchs@bchs.com.au.

People never forget how you make them feel and Bendigo Community Health Services' Rhonda Kirby knows that only too well. In her own words she talks about her time working at BCHS, what she hopes the community knows about us, plus she shares a few of her favourite Bendigo things.

My name is Rhonda Kirby and I've worked for Bendigo Community Health Services for nearly seven years now. I'm the Client Services Supervisor at the Mitchell Street clinic.

The best part of my job, aside from my team, is our clients. I love talking to our elderly patients, who often treat their visit to BCHS as an



outing. I really hope that the community knows that we welcome you no matter your circumstances, and we really are here to help.

Going back to my team, I love working with them and the clinicians at Mitchell Street, although I do miss our Eaglehawk site and cannot wait to be reunited with our extended team later this year when the works out there are finished. I have made so many friends through working at BCHS; some have moved on but I still keep in touch with.

I am nearing retirement and will really miss working in the medical field, we really are like one big family, but who knows, I might come back as a volunteer! Other than my work, I enjoy heading to some of my favourite Bendigo spots; I love the Fox and Giraffe on the weekends for coffee / brunch. And I also love The Rifle for meals and a catch-up with friends.



Step into learning in 2025

Our Stepping Stones Early Childhood Intervention Program is now open for enrolments for 2025.

Stepping Stones is for children aged from two to school age who have an NDIS early childhood plan. The program is a registered and accredited NDIS provider. The group-based program promotes children's development and learning through stimulation and play and is centred around each family's needs, concerns and hopes for their child.

The amazing team – Lara, Robbie and Terrie – have a combined 83 years' experience working in early childhood development. They can assist children and their families to understand their strengths, gain new skills, encourage play as a valuable way of learning and assist with the transition to school and preschool.

The program is run from a former childcare centre at our Kangaroo Flat site at 19 Helm Street. It's a warm and welcoming place with dedicated areas for indoor and outdoor play.

The main room features comfortable furniture, toys, books and our resident fish, who all the children love. We also have a sensory room, child-friendly bathroom and a great backyard with a playground and trampoline.

"The Stepping Stones group has been a great program for my daughter," said a recent participating family.



Top: The beautiful Stepping Stones outdoor play space. Above: Lara is excited for the year ahead.

"The staff have given her independence skills and different strategies to help her cope with things, which has improved her way of interacting with others and dealing with different situations."

For more information or to enquire about booking a spot email beip@bchs.com.au or call 5406 1200.

Child safety commitment

Bendigo Community Health Services values children from all backgrounds. We are dedicated to making our community a safe, nurturing and welcoming place for children to grow and develop. We are committed to making sure ALL children reach their individual potential. We will do this by supporting families to keep children safe, healthy, happy; helping families support children to reach their full potential; and effectively advocating for children and being a champion for quality outcomes in child health and wellbeing. Visit <u>bchs.com.au</u> to read our child safety commitment in full.



Big win for Emergency Preparedness Program

A life-saving program preparing migrant and refugee communities for the dangers of fires, floods and heatwaves has been recognised in the 2024 Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence.

Bendigo Community Health Services has been delivering its Emergency Preparedness Program since 2020, alongside partners the City of Greater Bendigo, CFA and VICSES.

In December last year the CFA's Paul Tangey and BCHS' Zahir, Nido and Shee Lee, pictured above, travelled to Government House to receive the award from the Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner.

Refugee and Cultural Diversity Senior Leader Kaye Graves said she was immensely proud of her team, partners and the program.

"A real highlight of the program is that it's driven and delivered by our bilingual staff of lived experiences," she said.

"It needs to be embedded in settlement programs throughout the state, and we've now got it to a point where we know it's culturally safe, and it works."

KAREN NEW YEAR

BCHS staff recently celebrated the Karen New Year with the community and what an event it was! There were dances that were complex in choreography and rich in culture, plus emergency services were on hand to give information and promote volunteering. Congratulations to all involved in the beautiful event.





FOOD FIGHT FOR OUR KIDS

The processed food industry is making their junk our problem & Bendigo Community Health Services is taking a stand.

BCHS has joined the Cancer Council Victoria's Food Fight campaign which is calling on the Victorian Government to give our kids a healthier future by removing unhealthy food & drink advertising from public transport & near schools.

With no formal standards to protect children from junk food advertising in Australia, BCHS CEO Mandy Hutchinson said the targeting of young people by the junk food industry has to stop. deserve to grow up in a community that supports their health and wellbeing," she said. "We receive Department of Health funding to develop and implement prevention and health promotion initiatives, with 70% of our work focused on increasing healthy eating, increasing active living, reducing tobacco and ecigarette related harm, so this is a fight worth having."

Senior Leader of Integrated Health Promotion officer Natalia Smith agreed. "We are currently funding two promotions on local buses that encourage people to 'Take the First Step' to healthy eating and active living," she explained. "Unfortunately, one of these



buses features our healthy eating message along one full side with a McDonald's ad on the back window. This is so disappointing and counteractive to our efforts."

Read our full story at <u>bchs.com.au</u>. Want to join the Food Fight too? Visit <u>Food</u> <u>Fight! - Cancer Council Victoria</u>.

"Children and young people

Healthy eating commitment bears free fruit



When it comes to snacks, it's a fruit for all thanks to our Take the First Step campaign.

As well as when visiting any of our BCHS sites, you can pick up a free piece of fruit from community hubs including Long Gully Neighbourhood House, Eaglehawk Community House, Heathcote Community House and Kangaroo Flat library. BCHS Health Promotion officer Moni, pictured, said there was a range of reasons why people weren't eating enough fruit and veggies, from lack of time to habit to cost and lack of awareness.

"With our free fruit in such a variety of places we hope we can help the community make a difference to their eating habits," she said.



Our services at a glance

Did you know we run more than 50 services supporting the community? Find out more about how we can help you and your family at www.bchs.com.au

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS COUNSELLING (ADULT & YOUTH)

Brief and ongoing counselling support, assessment and referrals for individuals and families affected by alcohol and drug use. Youth alcohol and drug counselling provides supportive counselling for young people 16 to 25 years.

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS CARE AND RECOVERY COORDINATION

Provides support, advocacy and referral for individuals accessing treatment programs.

FAMILY DRUG SUPPORT

Our qualified alcohol & drug counsellor provides support and education to families experiencing challenges related to the use of drugs or alcohol.

MOBILE DRUG SAFETY WORKER

An experienced harm reduction worker is available to individuals anonymously to access NSP services and receive harm reduction education, information and support.

NEEDLE SYRINGE PROGRAM (NSP) OUTREACH TEAM

NSP provides clean injecting equipment, safe sex and health information, harm reduction education, support and referral to health and welfare services. Phone: 1800 636 514 7.30pm-10.45pm Tuesday – Saturday.

NON-RESIDENTIAL WITHDRAWAL SERVICE (HOME BASED)

Provides non-residential withdrawal treatment and support services in conjunction with your medical practitioner.

RESIDENTIAL WITHDRAWL SERVICE (NOVA HOUSE)

An adult residential program for people undertaking alcohol and or drug withdrawal for individuals 21 years and over who live in Victoria. An assessment process is required to ensure people are suited for Nova House.

SPECIALIST PHARMACOTHERAPY

Specialist Alcohol and Other Drug practitioners provide Opiate Replacement Therapy. This includes LAIB (Long acting Injectable Buprenorphine), Buprenorphine and Methadone.

PEER SUPPORT WORKER

Our qualified, lived experience worker is there to provide assistance and support to help you navigate your AOD journey.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Providing specialist children's health and allied health services for children, adolescents and their families.

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION

Provides group programs for children 2-5 years who have a self or managed NDIS plan.

FAMILY DAY CARE

Provides quality education and care for children up to 12 years of age in the homes of approved educators.

FAMILY SERVICES

Family Services offers an outreach service that assists children and parents to identify goals and respond to their unique needs and concerns.

Family Services takes the time to get to know what the family's strengths and challenges are for children and young people and then works together with parents and carers to make plans to address these needs.

PAEDIATRIC PHYSIOTHERAPY AND PODIATRY

Provides assessment, management and support for children and adolescents.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Provides assessment, management and support for adolescents and adults who have concerns with mobility and acute/chronic pain

SMALLTALK SUPPORTED PLAYGROUP AND IN HOME SUPPORT

With a qualified facilitator, Smalltalk uses a set of strategies that parents can use to enhance the home learning environment for children from birth to school age. The Smalltalk program is delivered through 5 supported playgroups and can be offered to individual families in their home.

COUNSELLING AND MENTAL HEALTH

CULTURALLY SENSITIVE COUNSELLING

Available to people of refugee background and in a relaxed private space, talk about your worries and start to find ways to cope with them. You will receive acceptance, support and respect in a safe and nonjudgmental environment.

COUNSELLING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Short to medium term counselling, holistic assessments, referral adults working towards better health and well-being. Includes depression, anxiety, relationship issues, family difficulties, grief and loss.



EDUCATION & PARTNERSHIPS

HEALTH PROMOTION AND EDUCATION

A range of programs and initiatives that empower individuals to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence needed for better health and wellbeing. We also offer skilled speakers are available to address groups on health and wellbeing issues.

HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIPS

BCHS clients have access to free and confidential legal advice from a lawyer provided by Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre.

WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYMENT HEALTH

Supporting workplaces to assess and develop specific workplace health programs to suit their needs.

STAYING HEALTHY

DIABETES SERVICE

Nurse-led clinic providing information, education & clinical care to people living with diabetes. Referral required. Includes Type 1, Type 2 & other types of diabetes, CGM starts and reviews available.

COMMUNITY DIABETES CLINIC

Short-term doctor-led clinic for people living with Type 2 diabetes requiring medical intervention and management. GP or specialist referral required.

ELMORE SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP

Offers support to frail, aged or disabled men and women to assist to maintain independence in the Elmore Community.

EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGY

Offers exercise & lifestyle support to assist in the prevention & management of health conditions and injuries.

FALLS AND BALANCE EXERCISE PROGRAM

A group exercise program designed to reduce falls risks in adults, increase strength and improve balance.

MEDICAL PRACTICE

Bendigo

Bendigo

75 Mitchell St

165 Hargreaves St

Doctors offering bulk billing general practice services at Mitchell Street.

QUIT SMOKING PROGRAM

Free program to help reduce or quit smoking.

PODIATRY

Provides assessment, management and support for children, adolescents and adults with mobility and function issues, foot care and monitoring of foot health.

STRENGTH TRAINING

Providing an opportunity for older adults to complete a personalised exercise program in a supervised group. We aim to support individuals to improve or maintain strength, balance, mobility and function.

TYPE 2 DIABETES EXERCISE PROGRAM

A group program offering exercise and lifestyle support for people with Type 2 diabetes.

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH HUB

Blood borne virus (BBV) and sexually transmissible infection (STI) prevention, testing and treatment, including PrEP and PEP. Contraception education and services. Pregnancy testing, care and termination. Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain clinic. Women's health including managing periods, menopause, and cervical screening tests. Trans and gender diverse sexual health.

MEN'S HEALTH CLINIC

Annual check-ups, health assessments and referral information for men and gender diverse people.

For appointments or more information call: 5406 1200 Fax for all sites: 5441 4200 PO Box 1121, Bendigo Central, Vic 3552

Kangaroo Flat 19 Helm St

White Hills 501A Napier St Elmore 46 Jeffrey St Tel: 5432 6001 Fax: 5432 6101

FORMER REFUGEES

HUMANITARIAN SETTLEMENT SERVICES PROGRAM (HSP)

Supports newly arrived humanitarian arrivals of refugee background in Australian with a range of services to address immediate needs and ongoing orientation to their new country.

REFUGEE HEALTH NURSE

Supporting service agencies to better understand and deliver health care to refugees where they live. Contact our central office.

SETTLEMENT ENGAGEMENT TRANSITION

SUPPORT SERVICES (SETS) use intake, assessment, goal plans, referrals and advocacy as cornerstones of practice. Utilising a range of engagement strategies including groups, individual and family settings the service aims to equip people with knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions and goals.

REFUGEE AND CULTRUAL DIVERSITY TEAM MIGRANT AND REFUGEE HEALTH

Co-designed culturally specific health information and education opportunities to build health and wellbeing, safe sustainable living and capacity to access services.

YOUTH

HEADSPACE BENDIGO

Supports young people between the ages of 12 and 25 years who are experiencing difficulties. Phone: 5406 1400.

YOUTH COUNSELLING SERVICE

For young people under 25 years, individual sessions and support available. Includes alcohol and drug counselling.

YOUTH HEALTH SERVICES

Provides a youth friendly health service including GP's, nurses and counsellors.

SUICIDE AWARENESS WALK Sunday, March 16, 2025

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Dai Gum San Chinese Precinct, 1-11 Bridge Street, Bendigo

The Bendigo Suicide Prevention Awareness Network walk on Sunday, March 16 allows people touched by suicide (and those who want to show their support for them) to remember loved ones, friends, work or school mates and to generate more public awareness of the issue of suicide in the Bendigo and Central Victorian communities.

Official SPAN T-shirts, caps, and bandannas for sale (cash only).

10.50am: Official welcoming ceremony.

11am: SPAN Suicide Awareness Walk starts (approximately two kilometres).

11.45am: Butterfly Remembrance ceremony.

Noon: Free sausage sizzle.

Donations to SPAN enable this community led organisation to have greater impact for those who have experienced suicide, donations can be made on the day or by emailing admin@spancv.org.au

Can you help us?



INC



If you are interested in sponsoring SPAN Central Victoria or have a question about the walk, please email at admin@spancv.org.au.

Learn more about us at www.spancv.org.au or f @SPANcentralvic