

# Finger Pointing and Calling (FPC) to reduce medication errors in opioid treatment

## What is FPC?



Pioneered by train drivers in the Japan railroad industry, FPC is widely used in several industries to reduce human error.

To strengthen the effect of the action FPC is composed of:



looking at



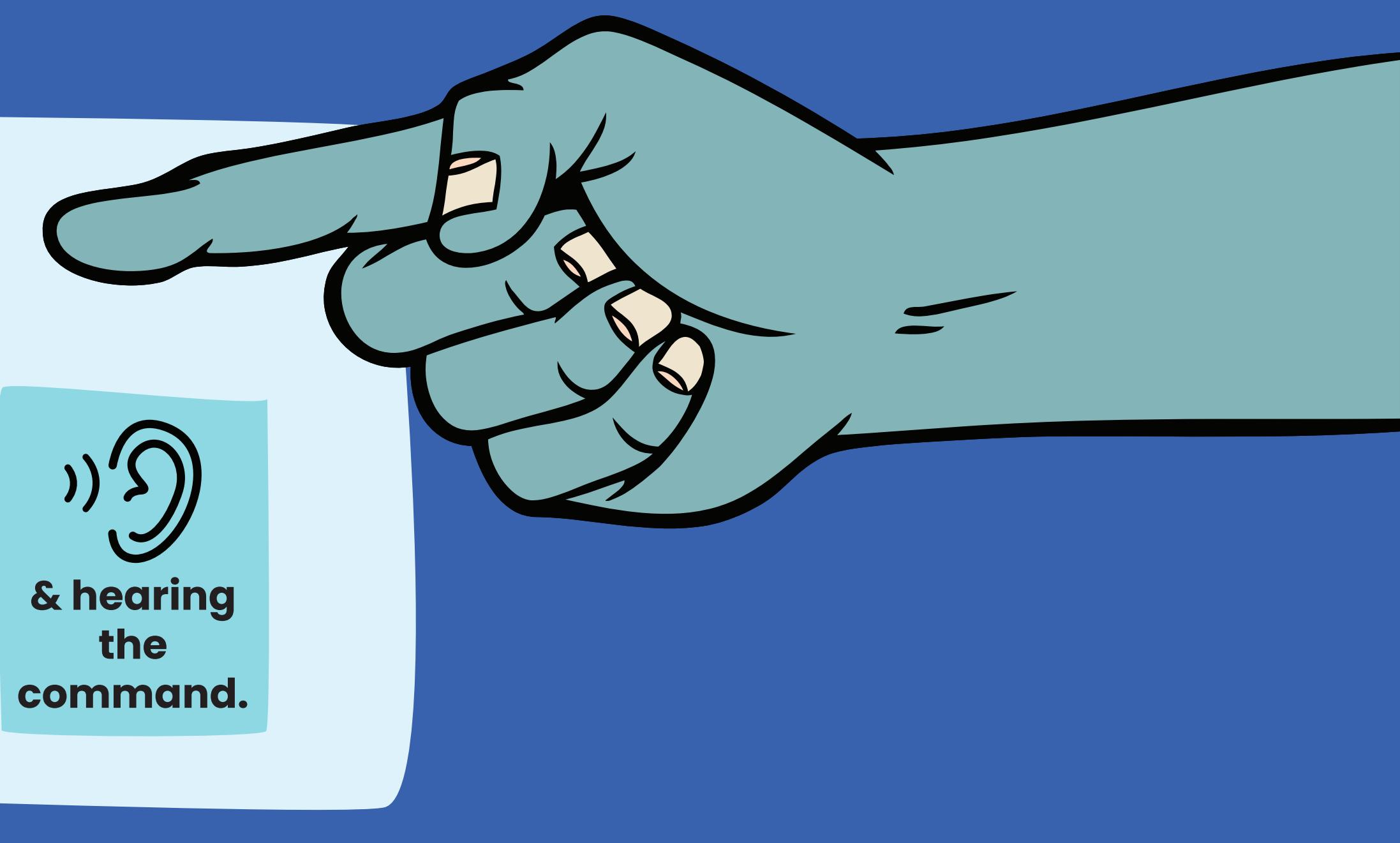
pointing at



speaking out loud



& hearing the command.



## Introduction

Metro North Health in Brisbane has one of the largest opioid treatment services in Australia. Whilst rapid uptake in demand for Long-Acting Injectable Buprenorphine (LAI-Bup) increased treatment options and flexibility for clients, it also increased workload and time pressure for clinicians, which resulted in a spike in medication errors in 2021. In total there were 5 errors in 6 months attributed to the repetitive nature of the task, the similarities in the packaging for different dosages, and similar medications.

## Aims

To reduce incidences of medication error for LAI-Bup by trialling Finger Pointing and Calling (FPC) in 3 large public opioid treatment services in Metro North Health.

### FPC reduces human error by:

- activating both the visual & motor centres of the brain simultaneously
- enhancing alertness, concentration & task awareness &
- has been implemented in healthcare to reduce medication error.

## Method/Approach

1

During the 6-month pilot, one staff member pointed to essential information (medication name, dose and expiry date) and called it out, while the second staff member checked it against the order.

2

We anticipated some resistance and defensiveness from staff members implementing the change, particularly due to increasing / competing demands. Therefore, staff involvement in the whole process and having a very simple solution that didn't involve more paperwork, processes or resources was considered vital to the pilot's potential success.

3

A 5-minute fun and engaging training was developed by the team to teach nurses the basics of the FPC technique including unpacking the background neuroscience. The resources used a comic-book style step-by-step guide featuring photos of team members.

## Outcomes



27 nurses trained



1502 LAI-Bup injections administered



0  
Zero medication errors recorded in 6 month trial

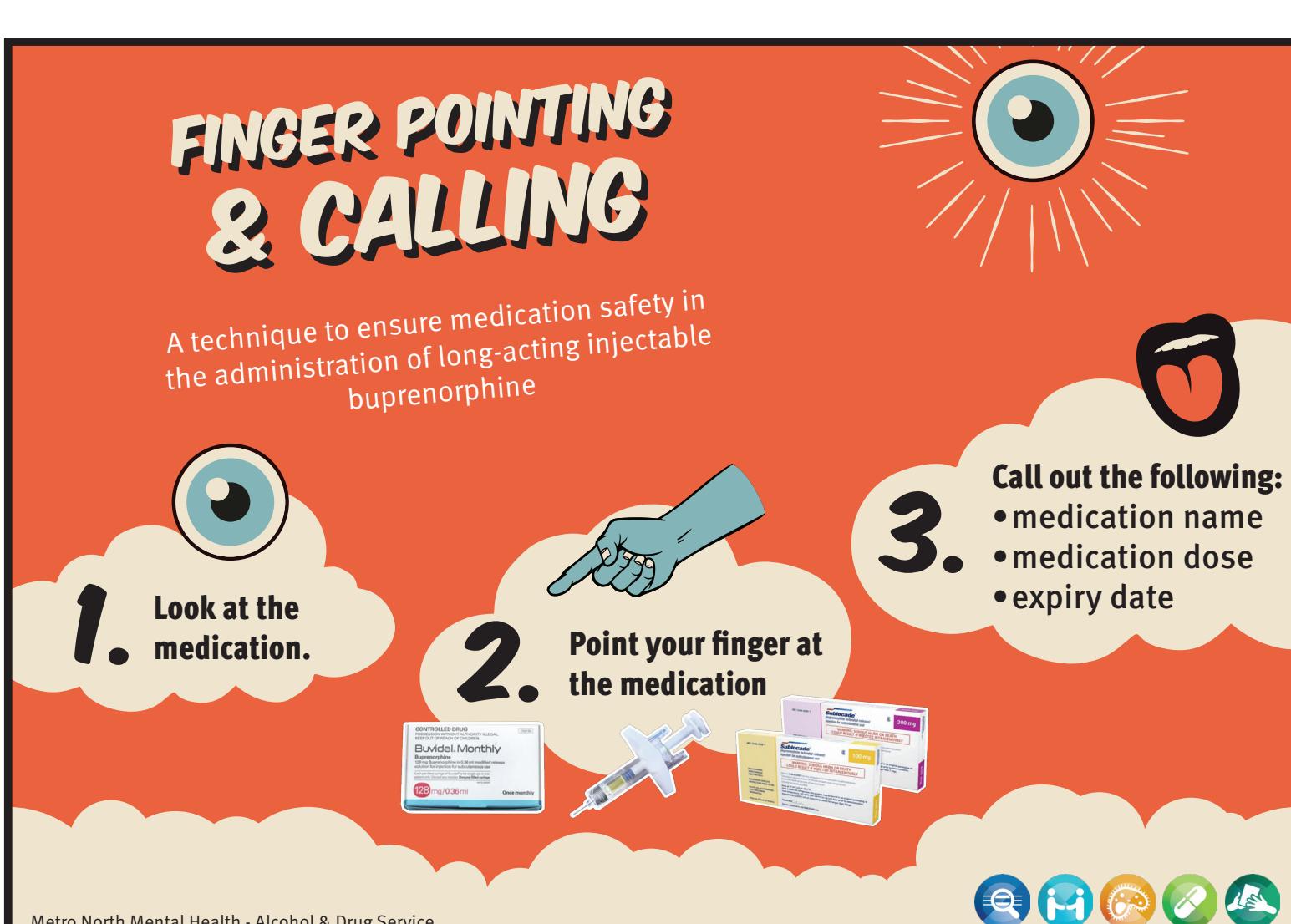
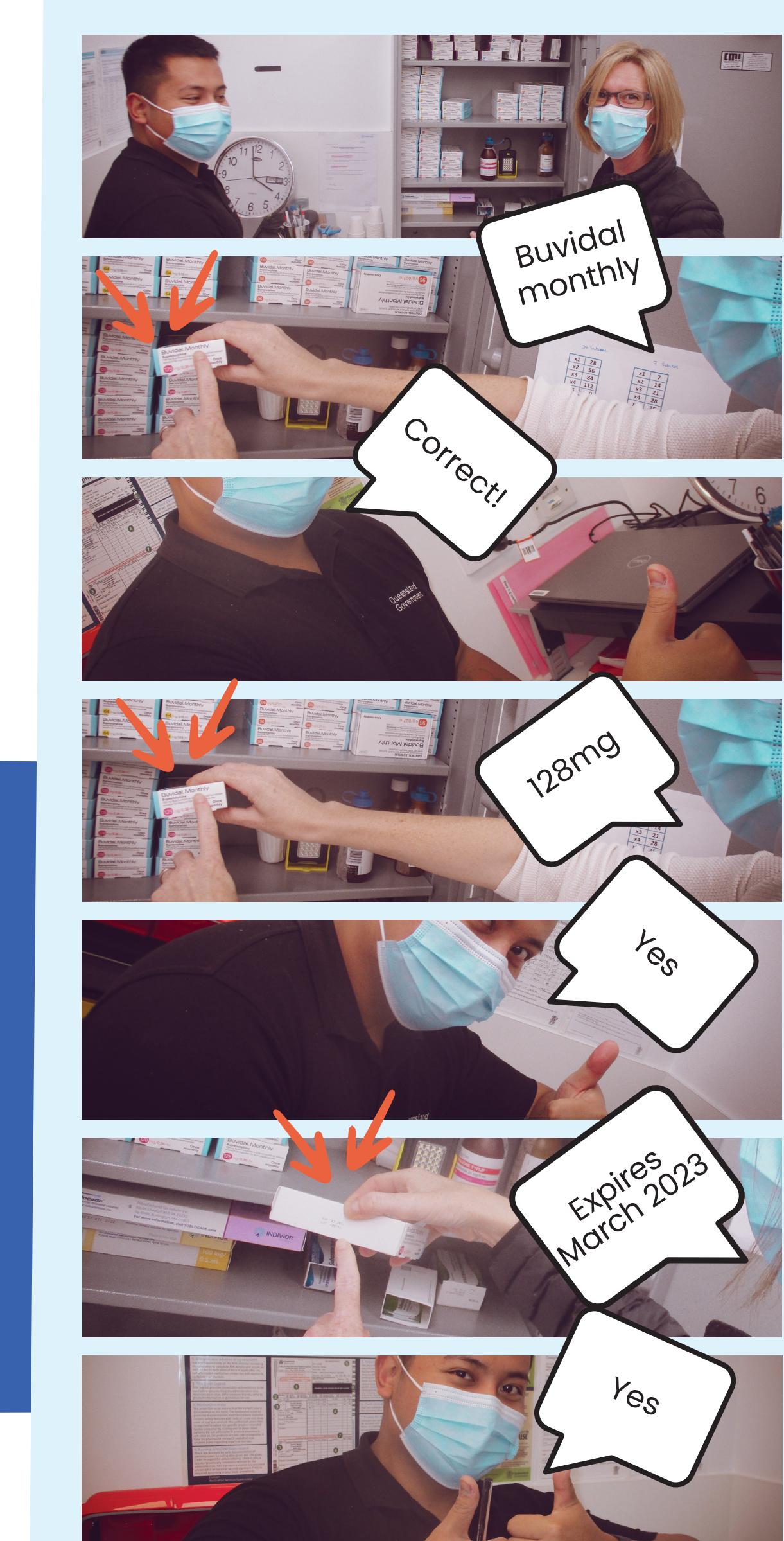


Overwhelming positive feedback from staff (satisfaction, perceived value and willingness)



Trial extended to a further 3 outpatient clinics

We want to supply 128mg Buvidal Monthly.



## Lessons learned

- 1 Simple solutions borrowed from other fields can help increase the medication safety in our services.
- 2 Develop the strategy from the bottom up. Ask for feedback from the staff using the technique and involve them in the development of training resources.
- 3 FPC has no overheads, is very effective and is well received.
- 4 FPC can be applied in pharmacies and other health services dispensing large volumes of medications or vaccines.

### References

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