

*Below L-R: Dr Vijay Roach, Chairman, Gidget Foundation; Professor Bryanne Barnett; Catherine Knox, CEO, Gidget Foundation; Terry Lawler, Chairman nib foundation; Greg Brown, CEO, North Shore Private Hospital*



# Perinatal anxiety and depression screening at North Shore Private Hospital

North Shore Private Hospital is introducing a new mental health screening program for pregnant women

**I**N A FIRST for private hospitals in Australia, perinatal mental health screening will be introduced at North Shore Private Hospital thanks to a new partnership between nib foundation and the Gidget Foundation.

The \$252,000 grant from nib foundation will enable the Emotional Wellbeing Program to be rolled out to all pregnant women attending the hospital for delivery, meaning more than 2,500 women will be screened annually for perinatal anxiety and depression.

nib foundation Chairman, Terry Lawler, said the delivery of the pilot program in

the private health sector was a significant development for expectant mothers.

“We are proud to be supporting the establishment of such an important health and wellbeing program for Australian mothers, which will help raise awareness and understanding of perinatal anxiety and depression,” Mr Lawler said.

“All mothers deserve to receive this simple and effective screening process that can reduce mental health problems during the perinatal period, creating stronger families and better maternal and infant psychological outcomes.”

Approximately 20 percent of mothers and 10 percent of fathers suffer from perinatal anxiety and depression, resulting in around 50,000 women and their families being affected by the issue each year.

Dr Vijay Roach, Chairman of the Gidget Foundation, said despite the high prevalence of the issue, awareness is poor in the community and among health professionals.

“Perinatal mood disturbance may manifest

as insomnia, anxiety, inability to care for the baby, despondency and depression,” Dr Roach said. “Currently, there is no screening available in the private health system, which means around 30 percent of women in New South Wales do not receive screening or psychosocial assessment.”

The program will see mothers screened and assessed antenatally by trained midwives. Those women identified as having anxiety and/or depression will be referred onto support services.

“Without the support of the nib foundation we would not be able to make this much-needed program a reality,” Dr Roach said. “We also acknowledge the ongoing support of North Shore Private Hospital CEO, Greg Brown, who has helped make this program possible through his personal interest and the enthusiasm of his staff.”

Ramsay Health Care will monitor the research closely over the next year to see whether this is a program that could be rolled out to other private hospitals. [PH](#)