

16 February, 2015

## Sick kids benefit from Children's Acute Review Service

The Children's Acute Review Service (CARS), established at Sutherland Hospital in March 2014, is providing a valuable specialised service for sick children which is reducing the need for them to attend the Emergency Department.

The Service is available for children who require a specialist paediatric medical consultation in the acute stage of an illness; or as a follow-up review in the recovery period.

It is staffed by expert health professionals including staff specialist paediatricians, paediatric registrars and a clinical nurse consultant.

Dr Christine Lau, Director of Paediatrics, said the service has already seen more than 600 sick children who have received specialised medical care for conditions such as acute respiratory or viral infections and jaundice without the need for children to attend the Emergency Department.

"We provide early intervention which may reduce the need for children to attend the Emergency Department or be admitted to hospital. Hospital admission can be daunting for young children and difficult for families," Dr Lau said.

"The Children's Acute Review Service facilitates timely follow-up and links children with community health providers for ongoing care. Infants with feeding concerns and weight loss have also been reviewed by our expert staff."

September 2014 was the busiest month for the service. In comparing the waiting times to be seen and treatment completed in the Emergency Department, preliminary data shows a trend towards reducing these waiting times for children.

Additionally, there has been more than 930 occasions of service; with some children being reviewed more than once.

"General Practitioners treat many children with a variety of illnesses. However, if a child requires a specialist paediatric consultation for treatment, or a second opinion for non-emergency type patients, CARS is designed to facilitate this process in a timely manner," Dr Lau said.

"By working in partnership with paediatric tertiary hospitals, CARS is able to provide families with paediatric services close to home.

"Staff are committed to providing coordinated, safe, quality healthcare. We are very excited about CARS – it is a step towards improving the healthcare of the Shire's growing population and a step forward in future healthcare delivery."

CARS treats children who require more than a GP visit but are not sick enough to warrant hospital admission. They can be referred from GPs, emergency departments, and Child and Family Health Centres.

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**South Eastern Sydney Local Health District**

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Located within the Hospital's Child and Adolescent Unit, CARS operates Monday to Friday; 11 am to 3pm by appointment.

Referrals can be made by phone discussion to the clinical nurse consultant (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm) or the paediatric registrar/consultant via the hospital switchboard at all other times.

Any child who requires immediate medical or emergency assessment should still be referred to the Sutherland Hospital Emergency Department.

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