

5 June, 2012

## **Study shows patients receive outstanding chronic disease care at Sutherland and St George Hospitals**

Patients with chronic disease are receiving outstanding care at Sutherland and St George Hospitals, spending less time in hospital and receiving more of their care at home.

Following the release of the recent Bureau of Health Information study of how adults with chronic disease use hospitals, Sutherland and St George Hospitals have shown they are leading the way.

Chronic diseases are a major health concern in NSW and understanding how people with these conditions access hospital is an important part of improving care.

According to Associate Professor Peter Gonski, Medical Co-director, Aged and Extended Care at Sutherland and St George Hospitals, expert chronic heart and lung teams have implemented major initiatives over many years that have reaped rewards.

“These initiatives have resulted in the improved treatment of patients with chronic diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and congestive heart failure. Diabetes, another chronic disease, will be also targeted in the future,” Associate Professor Gonski said.

“Patients who have been recently hospitalised with chronic conditions are subsequently assessed and managed in their homes by multidisciplinary teams consisting of expert medical, nursing and allied health clinicians.

“They are then managed either at home or brought to the hospital gymnasium,” he said.

“Patients treated at home, or as an outpatient, are provided recurrent medical monitoring and assessment, physiotherapy, medication review and education regarding medical conditions.

“Additionally, close relationships with general practitioners, medical specialists, community services, and hospital-based services are a vital link in the treatment of these patients.”

Associate Professor Gonski said that despite the total increased number of emergency department attendances every year for all medical conditions, data has shown that these initiatives have proven to dramatically reduce the number of hospitalisations and the length of stay in hospital for patients suffering chronic heart and lung problems.

“Most importantly, patients have shown improved exercise tolerance, reduced anxiety and depression and a better quality of life,” he said.

To view the study go to: [www.bhi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.bhi.nsw.gov.au)

---

**South Eastern Sydney Local Health District**  
**Media contact: Maxine Brennan 02 9113 2601 or 0413 028 776**