

26 November, 2015

Sending out an SOS Rapid health care and assessment for elderly at home

Older residents living in the Sutherland Shire are receiving rapid health care and assessment in their own home, thanks to a new innovative outreach service that is being run out of Southcare at Sutherland Hospital, in collaboration with the NSW Ambulance and local GPs.

The Southcare Outreach Service (SOS) has been instrumental in helping people over the age of 65 years avoid visits to the emergency department and hospital admissions.

Associate Professor Peter Gonski, Director of Southcare, Sutherland Hospital, said clients are able to receive appropriate health care and treatment in their own home without having to come into hospital.

“For many people, hospitals are more alienating than home, recovery can take longer and it is not easy for them or their families,” Professor Gonski said.

“SOS provides health care and medical attention – responding within one to 48 hours – to those with medical conditions such as acute back, knee and hip pain, a decline in mobility or a recent history of falling. Clients are also provided with appropriate interventions to help manage their conditions; and care planning for up to six weeks.

“Evidence shows there has been a decrease in visits to the emergency department and hospital admissions; and satisfaction of the service rates very high, with many people reporting if not for the SOS they would have gone to the hospital.”

Expert nurses, paramedics, physiotherapists and occupational therapists liaise with GPs to ensure co-ordination of care and the introduction of care plan requirements, including referral on to appropriate services, to ensure people can remain safe at home.

“Since its inception in February 2014, SOS has received more than 730 referrals from NSW Ambulance, GPs and other community services,” Professor Gonski said.

NSW Ambulance said the SOS program allows paramedics to deliver expert care to patients who need medical assistance in a way that best meets their clinical needs.

“NSW Ambulance is committed to delivering the right care to the right patient in the right location. Initiatives such as SOS allow our highly skilled paramedics to refer suitable patients to a more appropriate care pathway than a traditional emergency response allows,” Superintendent Sean Kearns, Acting Deputy Director of Operations for the sector said.

“Our Extended Care Paramedics trained in advanced assessment procedures and techniques see first-hand the benefits of this program and praise the outcomes already achieved for this patient group.”

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Media contact: Maxine Brennan 9113 2601/ 0413 028 776

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The SOS was named a finalist in the recent NSW Health Awards under the category Integrated Health Care.

The SOS team is located within the Southcare community building on-site at Sutherland Hospital. Southcare houses 22 community services that provide aged care and disability services to people living in the Sutherland Shire.

The Southcare Outreach Service is available seven days a week. For more information contact Southcare reception on 9540 7540.

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