Award winning teamwork at Sunshine Coast Palliative Care Service

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service’s Specialist Palliative Care Service is a national leader in patient care.

The service was recognised for its commitment to patients and recently awarded the Inaugural National Award for Outstanding Teamwork.

The Specialist Palliative Care Service team has used technology, leadership, collaboration and regular meetings to ensure patients and carers are reached across a broad geographic area.

The team undertake telephone meetings, video-conferencing; face-to-face meetings and attending events outside of work hours to ensure they provide quality care. During home visits, clinical nurses often perform a virtual consultation, connecting with a specialist using an iPad. The nurse is able to perform physical examinations requested by the specialist and can consult with family.

“Our Telehealth service has allowed for patients with complex symptoms to stay at home, allowing them to spend energy on what is important to them, reducing the burden and stress of travel to the hospital,” Palliative Care Nurse Unit Manager Suzanne Robson said.

“It allows increased access to people in more rural parts of the Sunshine Coast being able to have a consultation with a specialist palliative care doctor, to support the patients GP and community nurses to provide care in the home if the patient wishes.”

Palliative Care Australia Chief Executive Officer Liz Callaghan said the team had overcome a range of difficulties – including remoteness – to ensure good quality care.

“The team has a commitment to education, using available technology and a focus on self-care that means all the parts of the system work well together and are well cared for. It has made a difference to patients, carers and colleagues, and created an environment that promotes communication, trust and cooperation.”

“This service has taken the challenges its geography and patient needs have and turned them into opportunities to build a good team, meet client needs and work together efficiently and collaboratively,” Ms Callaghan said.

The Specialist Palliative Care Service is made up of the Outreach Team in Nambour and the Dove Palliative Care team at Caloundra. The campuses are two of only five organisations across Australia to have met all Palliative Care Outcome Collaborations benchmarks.

Dove Palliative Care Nurse Unit Manager Clodagh Barwise-Smith says the award is recognition of the commitment and energy the team has for patients and their families.
“The team is extremely proud and honoured to be acknowledged at this national level. They are really excited, and it gives that extra drive to continue doing that bit extra, being part of something so positive,” Ms Barwise-Smith said.

The Palliative Care Australia inaugural awards were held in Melbourne during the 13th Australia Palliative Care Conference Gala dinner on 3 September 2015.

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