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**Nurse navigators assist with patient’s entire health care journey**

A new service is helping patients navigate their way through complex health care needs and medical appointments.

The Maleny and Gympie communities are now benefitting from the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service’s (SCHHS) nurse navigators, who focus on a patient’s health care journey and their health needs.

Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Graham Wilkinson said the Nurse Navigator service would provide end-to-end care coordination for patients with the greatest health care needs.

“We have five nurse navigators who are delivering personalised care coordination for patients in Gympie and Maleny,” Mr Wilkinson said.

“For individuals with multiple complex health issues, having someone available to come to their house, guide them through the health care system and be a key point of contact will be a huge relief.

“The nurse navigators will be working very closely with the patients’ General Practitioner and other health providers to ensure patients are supported, assisted to access the most appropriate service, and receiving the best possible care, when and where needed,” he said.

Maleny nurse navigator Kaye Crawford, a nurse for 26 years, said the exciting development of the nurse navigator service was that it focused on the patient’s entire health care journey and all their health needs, rather than just on a specific disease or condition.

“I am based in beautiful Maleny where I work with individual G.P.’s as the main providers of patient centred care, assisting in the coordination of specialist appointments and providing a seamless transition for the patient between different service providers. It is very rewarding to be able to play an active role in helping make someone’s life better,” Ms Crawford said.

Jennifer Farmer and Liam Flynn, pioneering nurse navigators in Gympie, said the most satisfying aspect of the role was establishing rapport with patients and families, informing and educating them.

“I help to place patients at the centre of their care by including them in the care planning and the decision making process, and building positive therapeutic nurse-patient/carer/family relationships,” Ms Farmer said.

Mr Flynn said it was empowering to help people break down the barriers that were preventing them from achieving their health goals. “Some of those barriers involve decoding the system and ensuring that each patient is treated as an individual,” he said.
It’s so important to educate our patients on all aspects of their health, so they can take control and feel less vulnerable in reaching their health care goals.

For more information on the nurse navigator service, please contact the Nambour Community Health Centre on 5450 4750 or visit www.health.qld.gov.au/nmog/optimisingnursing/nurse-navigators

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