11 September 2018

**Nurse endoscopist improving patient care**

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service’s (SCHHS) Gastroenterology unit has implemented a nurse endoscopist as part of the health service’s growing innovative models of care.

A nurse endoscopist is an advanced, specialist registered nurse, trained under the supervision of medical specialists to perform endoscopic examinations, such as colonoscopy.

The SCHHS nurse endoscopist Tim Hucker has recently joined the SCHHS, after working as a clinical nurse consultant in Victoria. The newly created role here on the Sunshine Coast is helping meet the growing demand for colonoscopy.

“Specialist endoscopy nurses like myself are trained under the supervision of medical specialists to perform various endoscopic cases. My training involved performing approximately 300 supervised colonoscopies with a Senior Medical Officer as well as completing a post graduate course,” Mr Hucker said.

“Currently, I perform around five colonoscopy session each week, totalling around 120 cases per month. This is allowing other staff to attend to patient care, clinic sessions and more advanced procedures,” Mr Hucker said.

Bowel cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia, affecting one in 12 people by the age of 85, with the majority of cases diagnosed in patients aged over 50 years.

Colonoscopy plays a crucial role in the diagnosis, treatment and ongoing surveillance of bowel cancer. In 90 per cent of cases, bowel cancer can be treated effectively if its detected early.

Nurse Endoscopist Models of Care have been successfully implemented in both Queensland and Victoria since 2010 and other jurisdictions are developing similar models. The United States of America, United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand and the Netherlands also have centres that safely provide endoscopy services using this model.
Providing additional capacity within the health system to undertake early diagnostic procedures will significantly improve outcomes and help address existing waiting lists. The Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service believes that targeted introduction of registered nurses undertaking endoscopy has been an important part of improving health outcomes for Queenslanders.

ENDS

Media contact: Alicia Temple | Alexia Kelly | 5202 0083

Follow us! 💻 🐦