24 February 2017

Nurse practitioners: helping you access quality healthcare when and where you need it

The Sunshine Coast and Gympie communities are in good hands with a highly qualified team of nurse practitioners helping patients access quality healthcare when and where they need it.

Nurse practitioners are an innovative solution to accessible health care, and the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service’s (SCHHS) palliative care nurse practitioner works in the community providing exceptional care to ensure you receive the best health outcomes possible.

A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse educated to a master’s degree level, with extensive clinical training, and authorised to function autonomously and collaboratively in an advanced and extended clinical role.

In December 2016 Queensland’s most senior clinical nurses celebrated the ten-year anniversary of their specialised roles, Nurse Practitioners, commencing in Queensland.

Clinical Director Palliative Care, Dr Louise Welch said nurse practitioners are endorsed specialty practitioners and this means they are able to treat patients, including children, independently.

“With this level of training they are able to work independently in assessing and planning care, ordering and interpreting test results, prescribing medications and referring patients to relevant healthcare providers,” Dr Welch said.

“They’re also able to diagnose and treat infections, illnesses, burns, wounds, bites, stings, fractures, chest infections and other health conditions.”

A nurse for more than 10 years, palliative care nurse practitioner David Ruzicka primarily works within the community setting.

“I have been a nurse practitioner candidate for the last two years, and have just graduated in November as a fully qualified nurse practitioner,” Mr Ruzicka said.

“As a palliative care nurse practitioner I work as a key member of the healthcare team and collaborate with other nurses and healthcare professionals including palliative care consultants, G.P.’s, medical and surgical specialists, physiotherapists, dietitians, occupational therapists, social workers, and many others.

“I enjoy the increased scope of practice and responsibility of working as a nurse practitioner.
“It is satisfying to be able to enhance healthcare options and enable our patients to be seen in a more timely and responsive manner by an expert practitioner, strongly grounded within a nursing model of care.

“I enjoy visiting patients and families in their homes in what is usually a very challenging and fragile time in their lives. This is an absolute privilege and honour,” he said.

Mr Ruzicka said direct and indirect supervision and governance was provided by palliative care consultants for every patient interaction and intervention.

“The specialist palliative care team triages the patient to ensure that patient allocation to the nurse practitioner is appropriately aligned with the NP’s scope of practice and the patient’s specific palliative care needs.”

The nurse practitioner is different to a practice nurse. A practice nurse is a registered nurse or an enrolled nurse who provides a range of services in a general practice. The nurse practitioner is a registered nurse who is prepared at a minimum of Masters level and has met the requirements for endorsement by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).

ENDS

Media contact: Kirsty Olsen | 5470 6616 | 0408 713 747

Follow us! 📲 📡