

## Media statement

20 November 2019

### **Nutrition November – fighting malnutrition in hospital**

Malnutrition is a major issue in Australian hospitals, contributing to greater complications, longer length of hospital stays, poorer response to treatment, negative psychological outcomes and quality of life.

Approximately one in three patients admitted to hospital arrive already malnourished. Many patients will be at risk of developing malnutrition while in hospital. High risk groups include cancer, bowel surgery, mental health, liver disease and the elderly.

Rosemary Sander, Professional Lead Nutrition and Dietetics at Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) says malnutrition can have huge implications on quality of life and ultimately lead to poor patient outcomes.

“During **Nutrition November**, SCHHS will be educating both patients and staff on improving nutrition in the hospital environment. Staff will also be focused on promoting nutrition for recovery and preventing malnutrition for our patients,” Ms Sander said.

“We hear a lot in the media about the obesity epidemic and how we should be decreasing our fat and sugar intake, and this is certainly of great concern at a population level. However, within a hospital setting the focus shifts to maximising nutrition, ensuring patients have good nutrition during their stay and beyond, for recovery and well-being,” Ms Sander said.

“There are many factors impacting on nutritional status in the hospital environment including anxiety, loneliness, illness, medications and structured mealtimes. It is essential to recognise the provision of nutrition is an important part of quality care for every hospital patient.”

“SCHHS have a comprehensive program to weigh patients and screen the nutrition and hydration of patients within 24 hours of patient admission. We identify those patients at risk of malnutrition and develop a plan for nutrition care. Many staff are involved in supporting patient nutrition including Dietitians, Nutrition Assistants, Food Service staff, Nursing Staff, medical Staff, operational staff and other Allied Health,” she said.

“Our main goal is to fight malnutrition and improve patient outcomes. In the hospital setting we do this by:

- Acting early. The screening process allows us to quickly gain an impression of a patient’s nutrition status
- Taking care to assist and encourage meals and snacks
- Monitoring each patient’s intake and ensuring the correct diet is provided

# Sunshine Coast

## Hospital and Health Service

### Media statement

ENDS

Media contact: Alicia Temple | Alexia Kelly | 5202 0083 | 0408 713 747

Follow us!  