



26 March 2009

Caring Together: Expanding out of hospital care

NSW Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, announced today that Hospital in the Home programs for people with chronic and complex medical conditions will be expanded as part of a raft of improvements to the NSW health system.

“This initiative is part of the NSW Government’s *Caring Together: The Health Action Plan for NSW*, which was developed in response to the Garling Report,” the Minister said.

“Hospital in the Home programs are already providing options for people who are better managed in their own home where doctors, nurses and allied health team members provide dedicated care.

“Through *Caring Together*, more patients with chronic and complex conditions will receive home-based care over the next five years.

“Supporting and treating people in their home will take pressure off the hard-working doctors and nurses in our busy Emergency Departments while ensuring patients continue to get the care they need in a comfortable setting,” Mr Della Bosca said.

As part of our *Caring Together* initiative, the Severe Chronic Disease Management Program will be rolled out focussing on people over the age of 65 (45 years for the Indigenous community) with very high risk conditions including:

- Diabetes,
- Congestive health failure and other heart disease,
- Chronic obstructive lung disease, and
- High blood pressure.

“To support out of hospital care, NSW Health has trained 22 extended care paramedics to assess and treat patients without the need to attend emergency departments,” the Minister said.

“Additional extended care paramedics will be trained targeting rural areas.

“The Garling Inquiry indicates that an estimated 77 per cent of NSW residents - or more than 4.8 million people - live with at least one chronic disease, and half die from a chronic disease.

“These patients have serious health conditions which require high levels of health care, frequent use of health and community services, Emergency Department visits and multiple hospital admissions with longer stays,” Mr Della Bosca said.

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“NSW Health has established the NSW Chronic Care Program to improve the quality of care and life of people with chronic disease, and support their carers and families as well as reduce unplanned and avoidable admissions to hospitals,” the Minister said.

“A range of initiatives are under way to better integrate services including programs for self management support, rehabilitation, care coordination and advanced care planning.

“The focus of the *Caring Together* action plan is to promote a culture in hospitals where the care and treatment of the patient is at the centre of everything we do.

“As the Garling Report points out, NSW has one of the better public health care systems in the developed world but we need to meet the challenges of the future, including a growing and ageing population.

“The strategies being announced today are the result of extensive consultation across the State and from working closely with doctors, nurses and other health staff.

“These initiatives are only the beginning of important changes to continue to deliver the best possible health care and to ensure on-going patient care and safety.

“The full details of the *Caring Together* initiative will be announced next week,” the Minister added.

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