Patient Liaison Network Forum 2015

The 2015 Patient Liaison Network Forum, held on 27 February 2015, had a busy agenda with lots of interesting presentations. We will be showcasing an overview of some of these presentations in future Communiques. Below are two of the first to be shared.

For further information contact Pam Pratt, Patient Liaison Network Coordinator, via email pam.pratt@health.sa.gov.au or phone 8536 5368.

Whyalla Nurse Led Rape and Sexual Assault Support Service

The Whyalla Nurse Led Rape and Sexual Assault Support Service was a finalist in the 2014 SA Heath Awards, in the ‘Building and Strengthening Partnerships’ category.

After identifying the significant impact victims faced having to travel to Adelaide for physical examination and forensic evidence collection, the Whyalla Hospital along with Yarrow Place and SA Police worked together to establish this local nurse led model, a first for South Australia.

SAPOL highlighted the travel/wait time discouraged victims in following through with the reporting and identified the need for improvements. The local service allows for follow up care within the victim/survivor’s community.

A partnership with SAPOL was developed which incorporated forensic training and 5 days of intensive training at Yarrow Place which is the lead public health agency responding to adult rape and sexual assault in South Australia. This included physical examination, forensic evidence collection, injury documentation and various guidelines and procedures.

A dedicated private room was set up with the equipment required, private computer drive and separate case notes adhering to the Forensic Act.

Long term goals include:

- Provide an effective service that ensures speedy service, client comfort and convenience, reducing barriers.
- Evaluation of the service, conduct regular audits and incorporate ongoing training to maintain contemporary best practice for best patient outcomes
- Improve rural and remote rape/sexual assault reporting/processing
- Develop a sustainable model allowing further service development

The team is in regular communication with Yarrow Place who provides the support, guidance, governance and best practice guidelines. Yarrow Place reviews evidence collected, documentation, and photos etc to assess the quality of examinations and provide feedback to ensure contemporary best practice policy and procedure is followed. Ongoing evidence review and auditing processes allow for consumer confidence.
The benefits of this program include:

- It allows the victim to remain in the community
- Speedy processing
- Reduction in trauma
- Ongoing local counselling
- Confidentiality
- Follow up with local GP
- Cost effective
- Possibility more victims may report due to availability of a local service

In the future it is hoped this service can be extended to more regional areas providing community members with the same service available in metropolitan areas. Also there will be the development of a professional pathway for nurses as we continue to challenge barriers to nurses taking on advanced roles.

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McGrath Breast Care Nurses in Country SA

Jane McGrath was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 1996 at 31 years of age. She and her husband, Glen, found their way through the initial diagnosis, although the process was often confusing and complicated.

The McGrath Foundation was formed in 2002 post recovery. In 2003 Jane was re-diagnosed with breast cancer and had a Breast Care Nurse (BCN). The BCN’s impact was extraordinary. She could help make sense of what was happening around them, explain the treatment options, possible side effects and complications and also was someone Jane could voice her fears to.

In 2005, McGrath Foundation was relaunched with the aim of raising money to place BCN’s in areas of greatest need and to increase breast care awareness in young women.

From her experience Jane believed that the Foundation should work to increase BCNs across the country to try and ensure that as many women as possible diagnosed with breast cancer in Australia would have access to a BCN regardless of where they lived or their financial situation.

Since 2005, more than 30,000 families have been supported by BCN’s. Currently there are 102 McGrath BCN’s nationally with the aim to reach 110 by the 10th anniversary of the re-launch of the Foundation.

Eleven regions in South Australia are covered by BCN’s including;– Murray Bridge, Port Lincoln, Port Augusta, Whyalla, Wallaroo, Berri, Barossa, Mount Barker, Victor Harbor, Mount Gambier, Port Pirie and Broken Hill NSW which extends services into South Australia.
Some Statistics

- 1982 – 5,303 new cases Breast Cancer diagnosed in Australian women
- 2010 – 14,181 new cases Breast Cancer diagnosed in Australia women
- On average 37 females diagnosed with invasive breast cancer every day

McGrath Breast Care Nurses are Registered Nurses with specialist training and qualifications in breast care. They are funded by McGrath Foundation in partnership with Country Health SA Local Health Network. Breast Care Nurses aim to:

- Provide support and information to clients / families / carers throughout breast cancer experience
- Raise awareness of supportive services available
- Encourage high standards of treatment in breast care
- Promote breast awareness to everyone to aid early detection

Services they provide include:

- Education/provision of information
- Treatment options
- Physical and emotional support
- Referral to supportive services
- Work collaboratively with all members of the treatment team ie GP, Surgeon, metropolitan BCN’s, Medical Oncologist, Radiation Oncologist, Palliative Care

For further information contact Debbie Hayes, McGrath Breast Care Nurse, Barossa Hills Fleurieu region via email deborah.hayes@health.sa.gov.au.