

Nurse Practitioner in Aged Care

Project description

North East Valley Division of General Practice was successful in its application for funding (Budget \$357,611.12 GST incl.) under the Department of Health and Ageing's *Nurse Practitioner - Aged Care Models of Practice Program*. The project commenced in August 2011 and will conclude in June 2014.

Our model is a collaborative GP/nurse practitioner primary care model in which the nurse practitioner will be provided with clinical education and mentoring by the GPs who currently provide medical care to the residents of the facility at which the NP candidate is Manager. A hospital based geriatrician will also provide clinical supervision, and be responsible for assessment of the candidate. The candidate will be released for two days per week funded by the project to undertake this education and clinical supervision/mentoring. Upon completion of her candidacy, she will practise at the facility in collaboration with the GPs who have mentored her. This model, which has the key elements of community connection, clinical expertise and sustainability, has great potential to improve access to appropriate and timely medical care for a growing population group of older people from CALD backgrounds in the context of an ageing and time poor GP workforce.

The proposed model will have the benefit of providing more timely access to medical care for clients/residents as the nurse practitioner is employed on the facility site (Froniditha Thornbury). It also has the potential for decreased need for medical deputising services after hours as immediate in hours access will be available, and the likelihood of decreased transfers to hospital which is not always necessary and can be detrimental for frail older people.

As this is a collaborative model between the nurse practitioner and the GPs who provide medical care in this setting, another benefit is coordinated integrated care which leads to optimal patient outcomes. The model allows for up skilling of, and clinical support for, other staff at the RACF because of the ability of the onsite nurse practitioner to provide this. As the nurse practitioner is already an employee the provider, Froniditha Care, and is the current Manager at Froniditha Thornbury, it is anticipated that her role as Manager/nurse practitioner beyond the life of the project will be cost neutral.

NEVDGP contact officers for the Nurse Practitioner in Aged Care project are Diana Cooper (diana@nevdgp.org.au) and Clare Chiminello (clare@nevdgp.org.au) T 9496 4333.

This is an Australian Government initiative