



MEDIA RELEASE

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SWSAHS takes top accolades

South Western Sydney Area Health Service (SWSAHS) was awarded three major prizes at the State's top health awards on Friday night at The Australian Technology Park.

Five teams from hospitals and community health teams throughout SWSAHS were nominated as finalists, from a record number of 275 entries this year.

The sixth annual Baxter NSW Health Awards acknowledged innovative and quality health projects implemented in NSW Health and across the area health services.

NSW Department of Health Director-General Robyn Kruk opened the ceremony and NSW Health Minister Morris Iemma presented the awards.

SWSAHS won a 2004 NSW Health Award in three of ten main categories - Safety, Consumer Participation and Education and Training.

- **Education and Training category**

Winner: Bankstown Hospital – *The development and implementation of the Certificate III in Aged Care Work – Nursing Assistant.*

The hospital, in collaboration with the Department of Education and Training, developed and implemented a Vocational Education and Training (VET) program for year 11 and 12 HSC students.

The course provides practical work opportunities for students to develop their nursing career path and matriculate with a recognised nursing assistant qualification – Certificate III in Community Services (Aged Care Work), while enhancing staff numbers in the industry.

- **Safety of Healthcare category**

Winner: Liverpool Hospital Department of Rheumatology clinical nurse specialist Helene Rickard and Dr Kathryn Gibson – *Toxic drug monitoring*.

The team developed a standardised monitoring and nurse driven education program for patients on long-term and potentially toxic rheumatoid arthritis treatments to improve patient safety and compliance.

- **Consumer Participation in Healthcare category**

Winner: SWSAHS – *SWSAHS Community Participation Framework*

The framework was developed with staff and community representatives to drive effective community involvement in health service planning and decision-making processes.

SWSAHS acting community participation manager Alice Wood said she was pleased the award recognised the importance of community involvement in aspects of the health system.

“The *Community Participation Framework* is about building relationships, partnerships and trust,” Alice said.

“It is the result of more than 18 months of consultation between staff, the community and health executives to develop a workable and structured model, which was officially launched in June.

“Involving the community across a range of levels is crucial to creating a culture of openness, transparency and a relationship of trust,” she said.

The health awards showcase the pursuit of excellence from teams and individuals across the health system to improve the quality, innovation and safety of healthcare for the people of NSW.

Many winning projects can be applied as models across the State health system.

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