



**Department of Health**  
Government of **Western Australia**  
South Metropolitan Area Health Service

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**3 April 2008**

### **New initiative helps elderly in the Emergency Department**

A special team of multi-disciplinary health professionals has been formed at Rockingham Kwinana District Hospital's Emergency Department to assist elderly patients to remain at home.

Known as the Care Coordination Team (CCT) the team assesses patients for not only their presenting condition, but identifies whether they would need additional support.

The CCT includes a social worker, physiotherapist, occupational therapist and nurse who provide a full assessment service for the elderly patient in the Emergency Department.

One of the biggest benefits is that the team can continue the care of the patient and enable the medical and nursing staff to concentrate on assessing patients requiring immediate, urgent attention. This not only assists in reducing Emergency Department waiting times but also ensures comprehensive care is provided for the elderly patient.

Team leader, Cathy Bickford said there was a great deal of work done by senior physiotherapist Stacey Gibson, who initially got the team up and running in the ED. Other members of the team are Glenda MacNaghten (senior social worker), Sarah Pridgeon (senior physiotherapist) and Maria Anunciada (senior occupational therapist).

The introduction of the CCT has led to a fully integrated approach to health care in the Emergency Department which includes the Allied Health professionals. The initiative, through funding from the Council of Australian Governments Older Person Initiative, aims to get people home safely with appropriate support.

"Our aim is to get elderly patient's home safely and ensure that when they are discharged they have been thoroughly assessed so that we reduce the chances of them requiring further Emergency Department care or an admission to hospital," Cathy said.

Initially Emergency Department nurses assess the patient and under a risk-screen process identify if the elderly patient requires more assistance - if so, the patient is immediately referred to the CCT team for a comprehensive assessment.

"It is simple," said Cathy. "The team aims to get patients home and keep them supported at home."

**ENDS**

**Photo:** Sarah Pridgeon, Julie Maddocks, Glenda MacNaghten, Cathy Bickford, Maria Anunciada.

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