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MEDIA RELEASE

Video enhances links to health service

Non-english speakers and the hearing impaired in south western Sydney will now have improved access to healthcare services thanks to a new videointerpreting service for patients.

South Western Sydney Area Health Care Interpreter Service (HCIS) today launched two new videoconferencing units at Campbelltown and Liverpool hospitals, funded by the NSW Health Telehealth Initiative.

HCIS videointerpreting project manager Katarzyna Stack said the video-link up provided quality access to interpreting services for patients in Macarthur and Wingecarribee.

“We’ve offered a 24-hour multi-lingual and sign service for patients and clients across south-western Sydney through a team of interpreters since 1991,” Katarzyna said.

“New videoconferencing facilities easily bridge the distance from head office at Liverpool to Macarthur and Wingecarribee, and are more effective than telephone conferencing.

“The video link-up allows interpreting services to operate more efficiently meaning more non-english speaking patients will benefit, with extra comfort about the care they receive.

“Savings in travel time for interpreters will also lead to an increase in the volume of interpreting we can do,” she said.

Professional interpreters are integral to communicating with non-english speaking patients about their health and upholding their right to have equal access to a full range of public healthcare services.

“The specialised videointerpreting service was introduced in July to complement existing on-site and telephone services,” Katarzyna said.

“It adds to shared videoconferencing facilities at Camden and Bowral hospitals meaning our videointerpreting services can be linked throughout the region.”

Videointerpreting services can be booked by the healthcare provider for clinical consultations during business hours at all levels of the health service.

HCIS’s qualified interpreters are fluent in english and at least one other language, have been specifically trained to understand medical terminology and know how the health system works.

**Issued by South Western Sydney Area Health Service Public Affairs
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