Concord Hospital a finalist in 2012 Premier’s Awards

A service at Concord Hospital which reduces the number of bone fractures suffered by people with osteoporosis has been named as a finalist in the 2012 Premier’s Awards for Public Service.

The Fracture Liaison Service has been nominated in the Delivering Quality Customer Service category as a cost-effective and innovative model of care which could be used across the state.

In establishing the service, Professor Markus Seibel and his team at the Department of Endocrinology demonstrated that patients who had been investigated and treated by a specialised post-fracture service had a greatly reduced risk of having another fracture compared with patients who were not managed by Concord Hospital’s Fracture Liaison Service.

“Patients who suffer a hip, leg or arm fracture certainly get their fracture fixed with screws and pins, but nobody asks the question why did they have a fracture following such minimal impact in the first place,” Professor Seibel said.

"In other words, although there are medications available which can significantly reduce the risk of new fractures and access to these medications through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme has improved over the years, the majority of patients with osteoporotic fractures are being neither investigated nor treated for their underlying condition."

Osteoporosis is a condition where the bones become fragile and brittle. Even a minor bump or fall can cause a serious fracture.

Fractures resulting from osteoporosis can cause lasting pain, deformity, disability, loss of independence and can lead to premature death in older Australians. One in five people who suffer a hip fracture die within six to 12 months of sustaining the injury.

As many as four in five people living with osteoporosis do not know that they have the disease.

The study also showed that the time of the second fracture was much delayed in those patients attending the Fracture Clinic: 26 months compared to 16 months in the other group.

The medical director of Osteoporosis Australia, Professor Peter Ebeling, is strong supporter of the service.

“The results of this study conducted at Concord Hospital show unequivocally the major impact that a targeted and coordinated approach can have on reducing the burden of osteoporosis,” he said.

Winners will be announced on November 12.