New lead role for cancer researcher

Caring for the whole patient is something Merran Findlay knows all about.

As a senior oncology dietitian, she's committed years of clinical practice and research to ensure the supportive care needs of people with cancer, particularly in relation to nutrition, can be met.

"A cancer diagnosis often means a patient's nutritional status is compromised not just by the disease, but also by the treatment they are receiving," Ms Findlay said.

Sydney Local Health District is leading the way in supportive care, appointing Ms Findlay as the first executive research lead in cancer nutrition in NSW.

Working across the University of Sydney and Sydney Health Partners, Ms Findlay will set out to build the leading centre of excellence in supportive care in NSW.

"Comprehensive care is about supporting the whole person and their caregivers.

"We need to ask the patient what their priorities are during treatment and as they recover and we need to pay attention to their physical, nutritional, psychosocial and practical needs so that we can better support the individual and their family."

The new program builds on Ms Findlay's work during a prestigious National Health and Medical Research Council Translating Research Into Practice fellowship, where she created a new model of nutrition care for people with head and neck cancer based on patient feedback and the best available evidence.

As part of the Fellowship, Ms Findlay was selected to attend the highly competitive Harvard Business School intensive course on value-based health care delivery.

The District's chair of cancer nursing research, Professor Kate White, will work alongside Ms Findlay and said this was an exciting opportunity to support patients and their caregivers with a multidisciplinary approach to achieve the best outcomes.

"Our aim is to embed research evidence into clinical practice through increasing cancer supportive care activity and position the District, the University and Sydney Health Partners as a leader in the field."