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HOSPITAL VISITING HOURS TO BE RELAXED IN NEW TRIAL

Family and friends of hospital patients in Sydney Local Health District will be able to visit their loved ones any time of day, with the removal of restricted visiting hours under an innovative new policy that treats them as “partners in care”.

International research from the Institute for Patient- and Family-Centered Care shows having family members and friends close by during a hospital stay benefits both staff and patients, including fewer readmissions and better consistency of care.

The trial policy will be announced at Sydney Local Health District’s inaugural Patient and Family Experience Symposium on June 19, 2018.

District Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson said the change will ease the stress and anxiety of families with a loved one in hospital and help the recovery of patients.

“The historical view of strict visiting hours doesn’t make sense today with the demands on families,” Dr Anderson said.

“Many families are carers or will be providing care when the patient leaves our hospitals, so having them more involved will ease the transition back home.

“Partners in care also recognises families are changing and the people most important to a patient may not be blood relatives or official Next of Kin, but close friends and colleagues,” Dr Anderson said.

A pilot program is underway at Balmain Hospital with a view to rolling the policy out to RPA, Concord and Canterbury Hospitals over the coming months.

Visiting hours signage will be adjusted and changes made on wards for staff to trigger conversations with patients, families and friends about how they can participate in care.

About the Patient and Family Experience Symposium

The Sydney Local Health District Patient and Family Experience Symposium is part of the LHD’s annual Innovation Week. The Symposium will be held on Tuesday 19 June, 2018 from 9.30am to 3pm at the Centre for Education and Workforce Development, Rozelle. To register, visit www.slhd.nsw.gov.au/innovationSymposium

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