

June 18, 2018

## **NICVIEW: Parents as partners in care**

When a newborn baby arrives prematurely or is sick, there's nowhere a parent would rather be than by their side. Families are an integral part of the care of a new arrival and bonding between a parent and child is just as important in a hospital setting as it is at home.

At RPA's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), parents are encouraged to be present as much as they can, but the reality is many families have other children, work commitments or live a long distance from hospital. Often mums are recovering from childbirth elsewhere in the hospital and both parents need to find time to eat and sleep.

Now, thanks to an innovative webcam system called NICVIEW, parents, siblings and extended family can see their new baby anywhere, anytime, using a smartphone or tablet.

RPA is the first hospital in Sydney to install NICVIEW in the NICU. An unobtrusive camera has been mounted on each of the 34 cots that delivers live streamed video around the clock through a secure online portal.

Neonatal Staff Specialist Dr Adrienne Gordon said the system brings reassurance to parents, who often ring the NICU in the middle of the night to check on their bub, especially if they're very preterm or ill.

"Now they can just login to their phone or tablet and see for themselves that their baby is in safe hands," Dr Gordon said.

Parents are provided with a secure login to the webcam and can allow access to any relatives or friends who they would like to be part of their NICU experience. No recordings are made, and no images are stored. Caregivers in the NICU remain in control of video streaming and can manually disable cameras during treatment or at any time.

The \$175,000 NICVIEW system was funded entirely by donations. Dr Gordon said parents and staff were surveyed to ensure such a system would be welcomed and useful, and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

Acting Head of the Department of Newborn Care Dr Mark Greenhalgh said since the cameras had come online, parents had overwhelmingly reported feeling much better when leaving the nursery each day without their babies, knowing they could login and see them anytime.

"The parents say they feel comforted when they see their baby is unsettled and then a staff member comes to settle them down," he said.

Mums are also appreciating being able to see their babies during the night when they get up to express breastmilk, with many mums reporting increased supply.

The system also allows extended family who are interstate or overseas, or who are not able to travel to hospital to visit in person, to get to know the new member of the family.

NICVIEW in the NICU will be officially launched at the Sydney Innovation and Research Symposium on Friday June 22, 2018 at Australian Technology Park, Eveleigh.

Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive Dr Teresa Anderson said the introduction of NICVIEW is part of the District's emphasis on parents as partners in care.

"When parents feel more involved in their child's care, it strengthens the relationship between them and our staff and allows us to focus on the job of caring for these vulnerable babies," she said.

*For more information, contact Louise Hall, Strategic Communication Manager, Sydney Local Health District, on 0475 972 895*

## **About Sydney Research and Innovation Symposium**

Sydney Local Health District's annual symposium showcases leading healthcare experts, research and innovations and brings together more than 2,500 researchers, staff, clinicians, experts, and partner organisations to share ideas, foster collaboration and promote innovation in health and healthcare.