

# Australian Collaborative Commissioning program supporting frail and elderly recognised internationally

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The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) congratulates Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) and Sydney North Health Network on their partnership to support frail and elderly people in the community, which received an honorary mention at the prestigious International Hospital Federation Awards last week

“Frailty affects about 25% of the population aged over 70 and those living with frailty have poorer outcomes in hospitals. Focusing on both identifying and reducing frailty and minimising admissions to hospital is crucial for improving health outcomes for these people”, said Kylie Woolcock, Chief Executive, AHHA.

James Inglis NSLHD Director of Operations Integration said the Collaborative Commissioning program works by supporting GPs to identify patients at risk of presenting to the emergency department by providing them with faster access to specialists and community-based care.

“The program offers more alternatives to the hospital emergency department for people experiencing a decline in their health,” Mr Inglis said.

“The collaboration provides proactive and preventative health care to frail and older people across northern Sydney through a close network of hospital staff, GPs and community services so that they don’t end up in the emergency department unnecessarily.

“By supporting GPs to access more health services in the community for those at high risk of hospitalisation, we can achieve far better health outcomes for these vulnerable patients.”

In 2023, the program cut emergency visits and unplanned hospital admissions by 51 per cent, saving \$10.9 million.

A key part of the initiative, NSLHD’s Geriatric Outreach Service, provides rapid support to elderly patients to avoid hospitalisation. Since 2022, the service has dealt with 10,864 referrals for 6,712 patients, mostly from aged care homes, and over 75 per cent of cases were managed without a hospital stay—saving about \$10 million in 2023.

“This recognition on the global stage is a huge honour for the Collaborative Commissioning program and to all the people who have contributed to its success,” Mr Inglis said.

“The impact of frailty on the health outcomes in older people and their use of health services is a global challenge. International recognition of this model of care will see this work influence not only the wellbeing of people here in Australia, but the models that develop around the world,” said Ms Woolcock.

“Connecting healthcare leaders through the International Hospital Federation is an important way AHHA brings together leaders in health to share and showcase innovation so we can transform healthcare delivery worldwide.”

The online version of this [media release](#) can be found on the AHHA website. **The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.**

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