



# **Jillian Skinner MP**

## **Minister for Health**

## **Minister for Medical Research**

---

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

---

Tuesday, 30 October 2012

#### **INNOVATION HELPING OLDER PATIENTS TO AVOID UNNECESSARY HOSPITALISATION**

A clinician-led innovative program at Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai Hospital is providing nursing home residents with the best possible health care by helping them to avoid unnecessary hospitalisations.

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, and the Member for Hornsby, Matt Kean, today visited the hospital to see first-hand the successful Geriatric Rapid Acute Care Evaluation (GRACE) model of care.

The program has become the precursor to a John Hunter Hospital ED-nursing home project that has been extended to 11 hospitals across the state.

Under the GRACE model, hospital staff work in collaboration with general practitioners and aged care facilities to avoid hospital admissions by providing resources not traditionally available to aged care facilities.

Mrs Skinner said the GRACE program is putting patients first by providing residents from nursing homes with priority access to radiology and other investigations.

“Rather than treating patients from nursing homes in a hospital, treatment is provided in their own familiar environment – where possible,” Mrs Skinner said.

“If they do require hospital admission, their passage through the emergency department is facilitated with minimal waiting times because of better collaboration with their GPs, which helps to reduce unnecessary delays in diagnosis and treatment.”

Mr Kean said it was great to hear clinicians describe the positive impact on the emergency department.

“If hospital admission is necessary, GRACE patients are given access to rapid treatment to reduce their length of stay at Hornsby Hospital,” Mr Kean said.

“It’s fabulous to see clinicians given the ability to innovate and strengthen our public hospitals by improving access to timely, quality health care – and I’m proud to say it began right here in Hornsby.”

The key to GRACE’s success is the clinical nurse consultant, who takes responsibility for the telephone triage service and case manages all residential aged care facilities patients.

Hornsby Hospital geriatrician Associate Professor Sue Kurrle designed the GRACE program and evaluations of the model have since shown a 90 per cent decrease in bed days for patients from local nursing homes.