

The Power of Innovation

A health care system to meet our needs
NSW Health
 Symposium Oct 2012

Outpatient and Visitor Buggy Volunteer of the Year Award

Introduction

In 2007, volunteers at Westmead Hospital recognised that many less physically mobile outpatients and visitors experienced difficulties in walking long distances between the main entrances of the hospital and their destinations.

After an extensive planning and trial period, a modified battery-operated golf buggy able to carry 3 passengers was purchased.

The service is operated by volunteers who drive outpatients and visitors throughout the hospital on request.

As a result of extremely positive evaluations, a second buggy was purchased. The service provides around 10,000 trips per year.

This Service is highly valued by the hospital and community.

Aim

To provide less mobile patients and visitors with a safe, accessible and enjoyable method of transport along main pedestrian corridors of Westmead Hospital while maintaining dignity and respect.

Method

In 2007 the volunteer coordinator, Marilyn Ansell, conducted a patient and visitor survey.

The feedback from outpatients and visitors was that many of them required assistance in travelling between various places inside the very large facility.

A survey produced evidence which hospital management used to approve a trial of the buggy.

Research into available buggies was undertaken.

In 2008, a trial was conducted using a 2 person golf buggy to determine the suitability of this vehicle to transport people around the facility. This was successful; however it was found that the buggy often needed to carry more than one passenger for couples and families.

Results

The final design was a 3 passenger "Tourmaster" buggy, which was modified by installing handles and lowering the height of the vehicle. The purchase of the first buggy was funded by a bank at the hospital.

Due to the overwhelming success of the first buggy, which transported thousands of outpatients and visitors in its first year with extremely favourable feedback from users, volunteers and staff, a second buggy was purchased in 2009 with funds provided by a local bowling club.

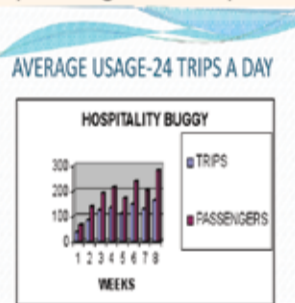
The outcome of this program is a safe and accessible mode of internal transport for outpatients and visitors with mobility issues attending Westmead Hospital. This has assisted them to attend appointments in comfort and on time. In 2012 we have two 3-seat buggies delivering approximately 10,000 trips per year.

Many outpatients and visitors have commented on how the buggy has improved their experience at the hospital, by helping them to get to their appointments in comfort, with less stress, and on time.

Conclusion

The buggies have made a significant difference not only to outpatients and visitors but also to orderlies, who were previously required to find wheelchairs to transport less mobile outpatients to their appointments. Due to the high demand on orderly services for inpatients, outpatients needing the assistance of a wheelchair were often waiting long periods of time, causing them to be late to appointments which in turn would impact on the department/ward waiting to see them.

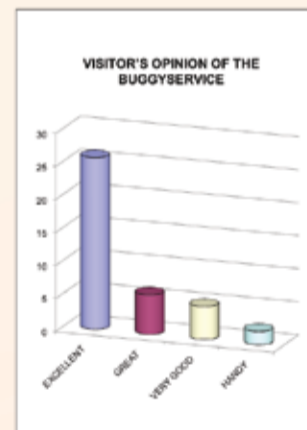
After 3 years of operation, and an overwhelming positive feedback, the buggies are now an integral part of the hospital, with volunteer drivers scheduled each week day between 8am and 4pm, providing approximately 40 trips daily. The cost of this service is minimal; it is well received by all patients and visitors; volunteers enjoy driving the buggies; and it is expected to continue well into the future. By listening to our community we were able to identify an important need and provide them with a much needed transport service within the hospital.



These statistics were taken from a 2008 presentation



Buggy drivers George, Chris, Jim Bob, Alan, Don and Preveen.



Results of an early survey conducted in 2009



Map of Level 2 Buggy Routes

Acknowledgements

- Volunteer Coordinator
- Transport Manager
- Maintenance Manager
- Security Manager
- Telecommunications Manager
- Corporate Services Manager
- Occupational Health & Safety Committee



Westmead Hospital Main Entrance



The arrival of the first Buggy, the Tourmaster



We now have two 3 seater Buggies completing more than 10,000 trips per year.



Health
 Western Sydney
 Local Health District