

Focus on reform

In recent times, significant debate and developments on the national healthcare front have prompted active responses and involvement from RDNS. RDNS remains firmly committed to ensuring that health reform delivers increased access, better services and more community-based healthcare options for the people we care for.

In April, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) released a major communication regarding national health reform. At that time, RDNS welcomed news of the Commonwealth's growing interest in the importance of community-based healthcare, particularly for the aged. CEO Dan Romanis said that, as the largest provider of Home and Community Care (HACC) services in Victoria, RDNS has a vital interest in the reform of community and aged care systems and processes.

"We strongly support any proposal to simplify the processes within which community care is delivered across Australia. In particular the current system needs to be made easier for clients to navigate," he said.

In a recent submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee, RDNS commented further on COAG reforms relating to health and hospitals. RDNS' submission noted that the Australian Government is taking on the challenge of introducing reform of Australia's healthcare system,

particularly by the increased recognition of the role that primary healthcare plays in maintaining the health and wellbeing of Australians.

However we also expressed concerns that despite the current language regarding a shift to focussing on out-of-hospital care as the long term solution for the health system, the majority of funds and new spending appears to continue to be allocated to existing programs.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) statistics show Australians enjoy a higher rate of hospitalisation than comparable OECD countries, so the recent announcement of funding for further hospital beds is a surprise. The RDNS view is that this funding should instead be targeted at the development of innovative ways to reduce the rate of, and need for, hospitalisation through prevention, early intervention and early discharge.

Likewise, the recent proposal of a four hour treatment period in Emergency Departments (EDs) has the potential to increase demand, and therefore delays in EDs as it will encourage people, who in recent years may have not presented to EDs because of lengthy ED waiting times and more suitable alternatives, to perhaps move back to a reliance on EDs for minor ailments.

Other aspects of our submission challenged the proposed purpose and general functioning of Primary Health Care Organisations (PHCOs) as well as our commitment to capitalising on work already done within the Victorian healthcare setting over the past decade to reduce duplication of services, rather than introducing new, expensive and heavily time-dependent alternatives.

In summary, CEO Dan Romanis said: "We submit that there are many positive elements to the current reform but sustainability can only be assured if funding is shifted from the in-patient setting to the full spectrum of the community setting with a focus on keeping individuals and the community well and less reliant on high-tech and expensive hospital treatment."



"Community healthcare must be a central focus of any future reforms," says CEO Dan Romanis

RDNS and Healthways Australia strike 'Australian first'

RDNS and Healthways Australia have entered into an agreement which will lead to the nationwide provision of comprehensive and integrated out-of-hospital nursing and allied health services, together with telephonic and web-based health support and telemonitoring.

As a result of the collaboration, patients will have access to integrated care at home that includes nursing, allied health, domiciliary care, care coordination, telephonic and web-based care support and telehealth monitoring.

Healthways Australia is the Australian operations of Healthways International; a global health company providing personalised population health support services in Health and Wellness, Chronic Disease Support, Care Coordination and Corporate Health.

Key features of the Healthways service include telephone-based support services (nurse and health coach) to improve patients' health and wellbeing and tools for measuring current health, assessing health risks, and preventing future health problems.

CEO Dan Romanis says, "This is the first time in Australia that people who are at risk of going to hospital, or have just left hospital, will be able to receive a totally coordinated and integrated approach to care in their home setting.

"A patient being discharged after a hip replacement or heart attack; or coping with an end of life condition will receive the face-to-face care they require, while also being monitored and supported telephonically," he says. "This model of care offers a unique opportunity to reduce the need for hospitalisation, decrease the average length of stay in hospital, and improve health outcomes for patients.

"Our services will be applicable in all areas of healthcare: rehabilitation, palliative care, aged care, veteran affairs, Hospital in the Home and hospital substitution."

Healthways Australia Managing Director, Mr Timothy Morphy says, "With health reform firmly front and square in everyone's mind, this is exactly the model of healthcare that both Governments and the private sector are calling for.

"For example, 70% of hospital events are now due to chronic disease. We have patients with chronic diseases landing on our hospital doorsteps, putting health professionals under ever-increasing pressure, preventing access for other acute care. They are stabilised and then discharged and the merry-go-round starts again. Many of these admissions are avoidable," he says.

"What we require is a new model of care: one that includes coordinated, multi-disciplinary care; sometimes medical in nature but often simply support and monitoring services. Most of these services currently exist but only in a small and fragmented way. This collaboration will change all that.

"If we can assist people to manage their chronic conditions at home rather than have to go to hospital we can take pressure off hospital emergency departments, slow the growth in escalating costs for governments, health funds and consumers. Above all we can seek to improve outcomes for patients," Mr Morphy says.

Hello Home Care NSW

RDNS has further expanded operations in New South Wales, having recently been appointed as an approved provider of domestic assistance, personal care and in-home respite by the Home Care Service of New South Wales.

Home Care Service New South Wales is one of a number of Home and Community Care providers funded by the Australian and New South Wales Governments to help people with a

disability, older people and their carers to live independently in their own homes.

We look forward to building on our long history of facilitating independent living by delivering these important support services and establishing a fruitful and lasting association with the Home Care Service.



RDNS deploys workforce management solution

The RDNS Customer Service Centre (CSC) operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to deliver constant and consistent telephone support to our clients and customers. The CSC has grown to over 60 staff in total, and receives around 800 inbound calls a day.

To manage these inbound calls, RDNS is deploying a workforce management software solution by Open Wave, to help us strike the balance between having the right number of call centre staff and making sure that they are working at the right times to answer fluctuating calls in a timely manner.

Open Wave is globally renowned for developing and providing workforce management solutions, which assist in forecasting and staff scheduling. Open Wave solutions help organisations to have the optimum number of staff at the appropriate times, balanced with the right skill sets, allowing for a more efficient and productive workforce.

The workforce management solution being introduced at RDNS takes into consideration our business requirements as well as the work/life balance of staff, by incorporating a staff self-service component, which allows staff to submit their preferred working times, request leave and swap shifts. The solution will deliver significant improvement in staff scheduling as the software will enable the CSC to forecast and plan more accurately and schedule staff more effectively.

Ian Cash, General Manager, Information Services at RDNS says: "We are excited to incorporate Open Wave's software solutions as it will allow us to manage our resources more effectively by spending less time manually scheduling staff.

The software does it all for us by forecasting our predicted number of calls and generating rosters to meet these inbound calls. It means that we will have a more efficient workforce and most importantly, we will be able to further improve our service levels so that we meet the needs of those that we care for."

Open Wave is also proud to be a RDNS sponsor, recognising and supporting the need for comprehensive, professional home nursing and healthcare. This article is a component of this sponsorship program.

For more information about Open Wave's solutions, call (03) 9008 1700 or visit www.open-wave.com



Open Wave's workforce management solution will assist planning and staff scheduling at the CSC

New funding for RDNS Institute

RDNS' Registered Training Office (RTO) - part of the RDNS Institute - has been awarded \$165,000 to provide training to Aged Care Workers. The Australian Government provides training programs to ensure that aged care workers are offered training opportunities to develop skills and improve quality of care.

Workers employed in and by approved providers of Community Aged Care Packages (CAPS, EACH & EACH-D) are eligible for funded training places in Certificate III and Certificate IV in Home and Community Care.

As an approved provider, RDNS will be working in partnership with Jewish Care to provide Certificate III in HACC (18 places funded) and Certificate IV in HACC (21 places funded).

The aim of the workforce development program is to enhance the skills and knowledge of community aged care workers employed in and by community aged care services that provide direct, home-based care to frail older Australians with complex care needs to obtain or upgrade their qualification to full Certificate level courses.

The training will commence in 2011 and be completed by March 2012.



Inaugural 'Nurse of the Year'

In a new initiative at RDNS, clients and their carers have the chance to say 'thank you' to their nurses as part of the first-ever 'RDNS Nurse of the Year - Client's Choice Award'.

Launched on International Nurses Day, the award gives RDNS clients, their carers and/or family the chance to publicly recognise the extraordinary efforts of an RDNS nurse who has made a positive impact on their lives. Any RDNS client who has received nursing care from RDNS between 1 January 2010 and 30 June 2010 has been eligible to nominate. Clients discharged from RDNS' care during this period were also eligible to enter.

RDNS clients and carers were invited to express in their own words why their RDNS nurse should win the prestigious new award, a task that CEO Dan Romanis says has been enthusiastically embraced.

"Every week we receive many letters from clients and their family or friends expressing gratitude for the wonderful work done by our nurses," he says. "The 'RDNS Nurse of the Year - Client's Choice Award' is a fitting channel for our clients to voice their appreciation and honour a person who has played an important role in their lives.

"At any one time our nurses are providing care to around 10,000 people, so we are hopeful that the award will be well supported by clients, their family and/or carers," he says.

"As well as giving clients an avenue to put their thoughts, feelings and feedback into words, it also gives our nurses a chance to receive a wonderful source of encouragement about their day-to-day work.

"For the winning nurse, it is obviously going to be a terrific honour. The real importance of the awards is that nominations come from our clients - hopefully it will provide inspiration across the board for clients and staff alike," Mr Romanis says.

The winner of the 'RDNS Nurse of the Year - Client's Choice Award' will be announced in District Nursing Week, 1-7 August 2010.

New senior team for RDNS

A new senior management team has been finalised at RDNS as the organisation pursues growth and diversification. Building on the back of RDNS' recent expansion into regional Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and New Zealand, the new team consists of six Executive General Managers (EGM) dedicated to navigating the organisation into new business territories.

Together with Chief Executive Officer Dan Romanis, who has been at the helm of RDNS since 1994, the new Senior Executive Team consists of:

Dr Georgia Hinton
– EGM, New Ventures

Rosemary Hogan
– EGM, Service Delivery

Kris Hume
– EGM, New South Wales

Anushiya Ponniah
– EGM, RDNS New Zealand

Vicki Sutton
– EGM, Corporate Services

Stelvio Vido
– EGM, Projects and
Business Development

Dan Romanis says that the new appointments will enable the organisation to pursue a growth and diversification agenda with confidence and the assurance that the organisation will be able to meet its current service demands as well as those to come.

"We have taken considerable time to ensure that we have assembled a team that is well suited to addressing the needs of a rapidly evolving changed health services agenda which RDNS must effectively address," Mr Romanis says.

"We have a senior management team that brings an enormous strength and the right mix of skills and abilities to allow RDNS to grow into new markets while at the same time enabling us to continue to effectively deliver our core business," he says.

As a major provider of home nursing services, with a strong focus on clinical quality, RDNS cares for around 10,000 people in Australia and New Zealand at any given point in time. Recent expansion into Tasmania, New South Wales and regional Victoria has seen RDNS expand its service provision, having recently won a number of new tenders in New South Wales and Victoria to provide nursing and personal care.

In New Zealand the organisation's initial focus has been on the provision of a new model of restorative personal care.

"We are balancing this accelerated period of growth and diversification with the crafting of structures and processes to ensure our quality, efficiency, sustainability and ongoing viability in all of our areas of current and future operations," Dan Romanis says.

"As always our primary focus is on ensuring that those in our care receive the best possible care we can provide. The establishment of this new team ensures that all aspects of our business will work together productively to ensure that new growth compliments our current service offerings," he says.

Dr Georgia Hinton
EGM
New Ventures



Rosemary Hogan
EGM
Service Delivery



Kris Hume
EGM
New South Wales



Anushiya Ponniah
EGM
RDNS New Zealand



Vicki Sutton
EGM
Corporate Services



Stelvio Vido
EGM
Projects and
Business Development



For the love of Monet

On International Nurses Day in mid-May, the winners of RDNS' first ever community art competition were announced at a gathering at Brightspace art gallery in St Kilda. Almost forty entries were received, with each work providing moving and engaging insights into RDNS, its work and its people. CEO Dan Romanis commended all artists on their work before announcing the winners.

In 3rd place and receiving \$1,000 in prize money, was a work that, according to the judges, was symbolically powerful. They were impressed by the detail of the paintwork and the use of space and perspective. Although small, they saw a complexity of emotion and depth and were impressed by the depiction of a nurse as a proactive doer of good deeds, about to metaphorically reanimate her client back to life. Congratulations to Chris Dyson for his work 'Arrival'.

In 2nd place, which carried a \$2,000 cash prize, was a work that had a great impact on the judges for its raw qualities and use of big empty space. They were moved by the notion of an RDNS client working towards recovery and regaining their sense of control. Overall, they felt an uplifting sense of hope in this piece. Congratulations to Jillian Fryer for 'A Patient's Progress'.

And in 1st place, which delivered \$3,000 in prize money, was a piece which is confronting in its stillness. It carries an evocative and powerful, yet ambiguous, sense of anticipation.

The use of metaphor is commanding and the judges felt that the central figure in the picture, which is small and unassuming, is the most powerful aspect, providing a beguiling focal point. We warmly congratulate Malcolm Gartside for his work 'Watching and Waiting'.

All works were judged by members of the professional art industry. Louisa Scott, who is Curator at the City of Port Phillip, was instrumental in helping to get the competition up and running and saw it all the way to its conclusion. Our other judge was Julie Shiels, herself a visual artist as well as being a lecturer within the Faculty of Art at RMIT University. We thank both sincerely for their valuable input and dedication of time.

The art competition represented something entirely new for RDNS and it was a worthwhile and fulfilling project. Certainly, art is subjective, but what is not in dispute as one viewed all of the artworks is the deep and significant impact that RDNS makes in the lives of so many across our communities.



1st prize: Malcolm Gartside - "Watching and Waiting"



2nd prize: Jillian Fryer - "A Patient's Progress"



3rd prize: Chris Dyson - "Arrival"