

Thursday, 13 July 2017

New app and magazine help improve the surgery journey

The front foyer of Wollongong Hospital will be transformed into a simulated Operating Theatre on Friday, to set the scene for the launch of two new and innovative patient resources developed by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District's Division of Surgery.

The *My Surgery Journey* magazine and smartphone app are designed to help patients prepare for surgery by providing trusted, timely, essential and easy-to-understand information.

The idea for the new resources came from Division of Surgery Clinical Nurse Consultant, James Brinton, who said Friday's launch will be the culmination of 12 months of collaboration between staff and patients, who have worked together to design a solution to some of the common needs for patients having surgery.

"The magazine and app are education and information tools aimed at improving all stages of the surgery journey for patients, their families and carers, and staff. The resources provide detailed advice and information, ranging from what to do in the lead-up to your surgery right through to what to expect when you go home," Mr Brinton said.

Division of Surgery Clinical Co-Director, Kate Fish said the new resources will also help reduce surgery cancellations by educating patients about the surgery process and the importance of arriving at hospital, ready and on-time.

"Unfortunately day-of-surgery cancellations can occur when a patient arrives late to hospital or hasn't followed pre-surgery instructions. This negatively impacts everyone involved; including the patient, our allocation of surgery resources and staff and, on a broader scale, our surgery waiting lists," Ms Fish said.

"The app and magazine are great ways to empower and educate our patients and help ensure they have undertaken the necessary preparations ahead of their surgery.

"Having patients who are informed and know what to expect also leads to less pre-operative anxiety, which has been linked to faster recovery and a shorter length-of-stay in hospital," she said.

My Surgery Journey smartphone app introduces Sir Gerry (*phonetically: sur-gery*), a light-hearted and relatable animated character, designed to simplify the surgery journey and give patients information and instructions in a relaxed and fun way.

"The free app is the first of its kind for an Australian public hospital. It allows patients to easily set up a personalised countdown to their surgery. Sir Gerry then provides preparation advice through a number of short and entertaining videos that cover hospital directions, medication tips, contact details, surgery information, and more," Mr Brinton said.

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

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My Surgery Journey Magazine is a complimentary resource providing information about the time before, during and after surgery. It includes advice about food, exercise, hygiene, health and medication choices, as well as detailed information about our hospitals, what to expect on the day of surgery and instructions for optimum recovery.

“The magazine has been set out in a clear, readable and eye-catching format – as a move away from traditional ‘hospital handouts’ which may not be as engaging and are often easy to misplace. The hard copy magazine also gives patients, staff and carers places to write notes and fill out their individual details – providing a fully tailored resource,” he said.

The magazine and app will be officially launched at **10am on Friday, 14 July** in the **Main Foyer of Wollongong Hospital** (Loftus Street entrance). The foyer is being transformed into a replica Operating Theatre for the event and surgical staff will be on hand to show patients, families, carers, visitors and staff the new education resources.

The *My Surgery Journey* project was made possible through funding provided by ISLHD’s Illuminate Innovation, an initiative of the Clinical Redesign and Access Unit designed to promote, develop and embed innovation throughout the District.

The *My Surgery Journey* smartphone app is available for free download on iTunes and Google Play. Search ‘My Surgery Journey’ in the app store.

Hard copies of the *My Surgery Journey* magazine will be given to pre-operative patients. The magazine is also available to read or download on the ISLHD website: islhd.health.nsw.gov.au on the surgery section listed under ‘Our Services’.

MEDIA NOTE: Media are invited to attend the launch event at 10am on Friday, 14 July 2017 at Wollongong Hospital to view the app and magazine and interview staff involved in developing the resources.