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District welcomes first prostate cancer specialist nurse

South Western Sydney Local Health District's first prostate cancer specialist nurse Diana Ngo encourages conversation about issues men may feel uncomfortable discussing.

Things like incontinence, urination and erectile dysfunction.

As part of her specialist role, Ms Ngo applies a practical and down-to-earth attitude in helping men through their diagnosis, treatment and post-treatment of prostate cancer and this means discussing their health issues.

"I have found men are relieved to have someone they can talk to and receive important and practical information and support," Ms Ngo said.

"There is little to no awkwardness in discussing things like erectile dysfunction and incontinence.

"In fact there is a lot which can be done and providing information and access to care and services is an important part of my role.

"My patients appreciate the opportunity to discuss their health care."

Ms Ngo is among more than 40 prostate cancer specialist nurses working in public and private hospitals across Australia.

The specialist nurses provide prostate cancer patients with an ongoing point of contact and support and help them access services both in hospitals and the community after treatment.

"I provide information from diagnosis onwards, including dealing with the effects of treatment and how to get help on any specific issues," Ms Ngo said.

"I coordinate care at any part of the cancer journey."

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australian men, according to the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA).

It is the most common cancer type in south western Sydney, accounting for 16.3 per cent of all cancers from 2010-2014, Cancer Institute NSW statistics show.

Ms Ngo hopes Prostate Cancer Awareness Month in September will raise awareness of the disease and encourage men to talk about their health.

"Any men with concerns such as urinary problems or changes should see their GP. Don't let embarrassment sand in your way," Ms Ngo.

"Seeing your GP and having a simple blood test can save your life."

The prostate cancer specialist nurse position at South Western Sydney Local Health District is funded by a Commonwealth grant administered by the PCFA.

The NSW Government is investing \$740 million into the redevelopment of Liverpool Hospital, including a new fully integrated cancer services centre. Across the District, the NSW Government is spending more than \$44 million on cancer services in 2018-19.

In addition, the NSW Government is also the largest investor in cancer research in the state, with over \$210 million invested through the Cancer Institute NSW since 2011.