Automated patient care

St Stephen’s Hospital unveils prototype of innovative digital hospital room

Set to open later this year, St Stephen’s Hervey Bay, a UnitingCare Health hospital, will utilise state-of-the-art technologies to provide medical and surgical services and the highest quality of patient care.

The project, which is partially funded by the federal government’s Health and Hospitals Fund Regional Priority Round, will provide the Fraser Coast Community with a much-improved healthcare service.

With the construction phase nearing completion at the Hervey Bay site, a prototype patient room has been set up at St Stephen’s sister hospital in Maryborough to road-test electronic equipment placement and movement.

“Now that we are moving closer towards the fit-out of the patient rooms at Hervey Bay we wanted to make sure things are ready, and that people and the new equipment can move easily and safely around our rooms,” said St Stephen’s General Manager, Leanne Tones.

“Doctors, nurses and staff from across UnitingCare Health have been heavily involved in the design of the new hospital and its electronic systems, and this prototype room enables us to see the benefits of their invaluable contributions in action.”

Director of Nursing Jill O’Brien said the prototype room would be used to help establish future workflows and for staff training and practice utilising the electronic devices in “real care scenarios”.

In the prototype patient room there is a computer built into the cabinetry beside the bed, and attached to a mobile arm above the bed is a multi-purpose Patient Entertainment System with a screen and keyboard.

Clinical staff at the new hospital will use the bedside computers to access and enter data into a patient’s Electronic Medical Record (EMR). EMRs will replace the traditional paper bedside medical chart and will contain a comprehensive record of a patient’s history, their treatment, pathology and test results, clinical observations and other vital information such as allergies. Monitoring systems will automatically send observations of the patient’s blood pressure, heart rate and temperature to the EMR.

Clinical staff will also be able to access EMRs on portable tablets and computers, and at electronic work stations throughout the new hospital, including fully mobile Workstations on Wheels.

Extensive security is integral to the electronic system, with only doctors and nurses associated with a patient’s care able to access the patient’s information.

The Patient Entertainment System (PES) will enable patients to watch television and videos, Skype family members, electronically order meals, and access educational information about their particular condition or illness. Doctors will also be able to use the PES screen to show patients their X-rays and other scans.

UnitingCare Health Executive Director Richard Royle said the new St Stephen’s Hospital at Hervey Bay was on track to transform healthcare in Australia.

“Using the latest eHealth technologies available, together with the best healthcare practices and a top class team of clinicians and staff will allow us to deliver the best outcomes and care for our patients,” he said.

“This project will establish St Stephen’s as the national benchmark in automated patient care, and will pave the way for further advancements across the whole of UnitingCare Health.”