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Telestroke service to support Goulburn Base Hospital patients

Stroke patients in the Goulburn area are among the latest to benefit from 24/7 access to an innovative new virtual care service as part of a \$21.7 million initiative being rolled out across NSW.

Since launching in March 2020, the NSW Telestroke Service has given more than 2,000 regional and rural residents increased access to life-saving stroke diagnosis and treatment.

It does this by connecting local doctors to specialist stroke physicians via video consultation in the Emergency Department.

“This crucial service will provide Goulburn region residents with rapid diagnosis and treatment from the state’s expert clinicians,” Brian Bonham, Southern NSW Local Health District Tablelands Network General Manager, said.

“Telestroke helps Goulburn Base Hospital doctors to decide the most appropriate treatment option for each patient. These options include urgent treatment to dissolve a clot locally, or urgent transfer to a specialised stroke centre for more complex treatment where appropriate.”

Every year, around 19,000 residents in NSW have a stroke and more than a third of people hospitalised for stroke in NSW are from regional, remote or rural areas.

At Goulburn Base Hospital from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, 58 stroke patients were admitted to hospital.

“Stroke is a time-critical medical emergency that can kill up to 1.9 million brain cells per minute,” Mr Bonham said.

“It is also really important that people learn to recognise stroke symptoms and call an ambulance immediately, to give stroke sufferers the best chance of a successful outcome.”

The F.A.S.T test is an easy way to spot the signs of stroke. FAST stands for:

- Face - Has their mouth drooped?
- Arms - Can the person lift both arms?
- Speech - Is the person’s speech slurred? Do they understand you?
- Time - Is critical. If you see any of these signs call 000 straight away.

Implementation of the NSW Telestroke Service is a collaboration between the Prince of Wales Hospital, eHealth NSW, Agency for Clinical Innovation and the Ministry of Health.

Set to expand to up sites across NSW by June 2022, the NSW Telestroke Service is a \$21.7 million NSW Government election commitment announced in March 2019 and jointly funded by the NSW and Commonwealth Governments.

Footage of the NSW Telestroke Service is available at: <https://vimeo.com/295104771>

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