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MEDIA RELEASE

ACHS Quality Improvement Awards Announced

A project which addresses one of the more contentious aspects of modern health – antibiotic use and the management of multi-resistant organisms - has been announced as the winner of the 15th Annual Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) Quality Improvement Awards, 2012.

Northern Beaches Health Service won the **Clinical Excellence and Patient Safety Award** for their “Antibiotic Stewardship – it’s as EASY as eASY” project, aimed at optimising clinical outcomes while minimising unintended consequences of antibiotic use such as toxicity and resistance, and reducing health care costs associated with the management of multi-resistance organisms.

The interventions created included implementing a locally developed electronic antibiotic stewardship system ‘eASY’, encouraging earlier de-escalation of therapy and planning for antibiotics in surgical prophylaxis.

ACHS Director of Development, Ms Linda O’Connor said Northern Beaches Health Service’s entry tackled an area that brings innovation to both practice and process.

“Particularly when there is evidence to suggest that up to 50% of prescribing of antibiotics is inappropriate and can potentially increase the risk of development of resistance, the eASY tool provides a basic framework for management of high risk medications in an institutional setting by combining the elements of safety and efficacy,” she said.

For the second year running, Hunter New England Health (HNE Health) won the **Non-Clinical Service Delivery Award** for their “ISBAR in our communication – building capacity and skill of healthcare communication project”. The ISBAR (introduction, situation, background, assessment, recommendation) tool improves staffs’ communication, and showed potential to reduce adverse incidents.

The **Healthcare Measurement Award** was won by the Food and Nutrition Services, St Vincent’s Private Hospital, NSW for their “Making food and nutrition care a priority on campus” project, addressing a high incidence of patients in Australia suffering from malnutrition.

“The overall standard from all entries across the three categories was outstanding, with one of the four Highly Commended Awards being given to a Hong Kong project, demonstrating the reach of the ACHS’s Evaluation and Quality Improvement Program (EQuIP),” Ms O’Connor said.

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