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Stroke Education Goes Online

Partnership demonstrates how new technology can help a good cause in more ways than one.

Stroke patients across Queensland can now receive better care thanks to a new online seminar program, the result of a partnership between Telstra, Net Ventures, Queensland Health and the National Stroke Foundation.

Providing the seminar program online means health professionals can not only be better educated on stroke, but also leaves them more time to spend with their patients and saves money.

Stroke is Australia's second single greatest killer and a leading cause of disability. Every year 53,000 Australians will suffer a new or recurrent stroke – that's one stroke every ten minutes – and in the next ten years more than half a million people in Australia will suffer a stroke.

While many people do survive a stroke, the majority of survivors have a disability or reduced quality of life after having a stroke. This means that the correct care after a stroke is very important to the recovery process, and to help stroke survivors' experience a better quality of life.

Previously the National Stroke Foundation conducted a series of seminars in capital cities and some key regional centres in parts of Australia to provide health practitioners with information on the best way to care for stroke patients. This meant that health practitioners often had to travel long distances to learn about the latest in stroke rehabilitation and recovery racking up travel costs and taking time away from their busy schedules. Local communities also lost out when their health practitioners were away attending seminars.

Dr Erin Lalor, CEO National Stroke Foundation said, "We think this is great news for stroke patients and health professionals. The guidelines are a really useful tool for people working in stroke care and now the seminars are available online and on demand more people will be able to access them.

"This is a great example of a creative way partners can bring their unique skills to helping stroke survivors. We couldn't have done this without the support of our partners," she said.

Health professionals from across Queensland have already taken part in the seminar program, with one participant commenting "I think this was a fantastic initiative and I hope it will be extended to other areas in the future."

Maria Simpson, Manager of Telstra's Community Investment program, said "Providing the seminars online is a practical demonstration of how Telstra's services can help stroke patients and the health community access the information they want, when they want it from wherever they live or work. This initiative also greatly reduces the cost to the National Stroke Foundation by delivering these new standards of care to health professionals wherever they operate in Australia."

Creating the online training course was a combined effort. Net Ventures donated their e-learning video technology and content production expertise, Queensland Health provided the funding to bring a range of experts from across Australia to Sydney for the filming and Telstra BigPond will host the Standards of Care seminars for free to the National Stroke Foundation for 12 months. The experts presenting the evidence also volunteered their time.

Michael Page Managing Director of Net Ventures, a leading on-line video specialist company, commented: "The use of online video is growing by over 600% around the world and its use in distance education, particularly e-health for a country the size of Australia, is exciting. It enables health professionals instant access to the latest health expertise, and gives stroke survivors' peace of mind that experts are just a click away from learning about the latest developments in stroke care.

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