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## **Award winning aged care service for the eastern suburbs**

A unique team of health professionals, Police and Paramedics are making a real difference to the lives of hundreds of elderly patients in the eastern suburbs, ensuring they receive appropriate care at the right time.

The Uniting War Memorial Hospital's Geriatric Flying Squad (GFS), was last month recognised nationally for its outstanding collaboration with NSW Police and NSW Ambulance at the HESTA Aged Care Awards.

Uniting War Memorial Hospital Executive Manager Gerard Hyde said in what has been a national first, the GFS has teamed up with Paramedics and Police Officers from Botany Bay Local Area Command to essentially keep older people in the area out of hospital.

"For us it's all about working together to prevent avoidable hospital and emergency department admissions, ensuring when appropriate patients receive quality health care in the comfort and security of their own homes," Mr Hyde said.

The formal arrangement between the three agencies means paramedics and police have an alternative destination for treatment and care of patients meeting specific criteria, thus avoiding emergency presentation.

"The GFS is an invaluable resource for police, in the past we only had the option of referring elderly people requiring help to emergency departments or NSW Ambulance, now we have a whole team of specialists who can take over care of the patient for us," Superintendent Bradley Hodder, NSW Police said.

"This partnership between us all means we know the patient will receive the right care in the right place at the right time. Gone are the days of leaving the patient at hospital or home and not knowing whether they have appropriate care plans in place," Claire Walker, Coordinator Primary and Community Care, NSW Ambulance said.

Paddington resident, Ronald Johnson, 87, is one patient who recently benefitted from the partnership when he was referred to the GFS from NSW Ambulance after breaking his leg at a train station. "Being in hospital can be a frightening experience for an elderly person, and having the support of a team that knows how to take care of you and where you should be treated, is just such a comfort."

Superintendent Hodder and NSW Ambulance Paramedics Claire Walker and Karen Nicols joined members of the GFS at the War Memorial Hospital on Wednesday to celebrate the partnership and the award win with ME Bank making a cheque presentation for \$10,000.