

Redfern Legal Centre



Media Release

HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP A SUCCESS FOR PATIENTS IN NEED

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An evaluation of the Health Justice Partnership (HJP) between Redfern Legal Centre and Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) has shown the innovative model provided legal support for 62 vulnerable hospital patients in its first six months, who would not have accessed assistance otherwise.

The Health Justice Partnership is a first of its kind initiative in NSW. It places a Redfern Legal Centre solicitor in the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA) for two days per week to provide legal assistance to patients and train hospital staff in identifying legal issues. A recent six month evaluation of the partnership shows:

- **80% of clients would not have otherwise accessed legal support**
- **50% of service users needed legal support with domestic violence issues**
- **Hospital staff have learned to identify social, economic or legal issues**

Joanna Shulman, CEO Redfern Legal Centre says the evaluation highlights the success of this collaborative approach to early intervention.

“Vulnerable patients often have much more than their physical health to deal with,” she said. “Issues such as domestic violence, child protection and housing severely impact on patients’ health and wellbeing. Legal support helps solve those connected issues.”

“Due to a government budget shortfall we rely on philanthropic funding to keep this vital partnership running,” Ms Shulman said. “The Gandevia Foundation has been a strong supporter of the Health Justice Partnership and we are urgently seeking more external support to help this partnership continue.”

Jodie Wright has experienced first hand how legal advice within the hospital setting assists patients.

“My daughter was getting chemotherapy for lymphoma at the RPA, but although she was getting better, we couldn’t go home,” says Ms Wright. “The mould, lack of ventilation and faulty plumbing in my public housing property made it unfit for her recovery. With legal support I was unable to get these issues fixed and bring her home.”

The Health-Justice Partnership movement is gaining momentum. Following Redfern Legal Centre’s lead, a other law firms and organisations in the State are in the process of establishing their own partnerships.

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