

Media Release
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Midwife honoured for emergency education

A Perth midwife's program to improve emergency care for pregnant women is a finalist in the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

Suzanne Rosenberg was an emergency nurse for many years before undertaking midwifery training. She quickly realised emergency department staff needed more information and equipment to support pregnant patients and their babies.

"As an emergency nurse you need to be able to identify a problem and act on it. Before I did midwifery, I didn't always know when I was looking at a problem," Ms Rosenberg said.

"Pregnant women present at emergency all the time. My aim is to help emergency department nurses recognise the problems, know who to contact and have the equipment they need."

Ms Rosenberg was working in emergency at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital and as a midwife in King Edward Memorial Hospital when she decided to tackle the issue. Managers at both hospitals supported her vision.

A working party was set up at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital to oversee the project. Ms Rosenberg provided training on what to look for when assessing pregnant women. She also created kits to help emergency staff manage deliveries, caesarian sections and breast-feeding issues.

"I used big pink boxes so they really stand out. Each box contains relevant policies, equipment and contact numbers so that emergency staff can provide the best care, quickly," Ms Rosenberg said.

"Statistics tell us that we will see one delivery in emergency a year and we need to be prepared for that."

Ms Rosenberg conducted department-wide training sessions on how to use the boxes, which contain step-by-step guides on drugs and dosages, umbilical cannulation packs, breastfeeding advice and baby formula.

The kits have already been used to deal with trauma patients and helped save a baby's life.

"Four nurses from the emergency department at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital have gone over to King Edward to spend a couple of days learning more about obstetrics. That exposure means nurses are more aware of what is normal and that improves their practice," Ms Rosenberg said.

The program has also been extended to Intensive Care Unit staff, to better prepare them for dealing with pregnant critically ill patients.

Ms Rosenberg's program is one of four finalists in the Innovation in Nursing category of the HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

The Innovation in Nursing winner will receive a \$10,000 grant to develop their service or program. Other awards are: Nurse of the Year with \$10,000 in education and travel grants, and Graduate Nurse of the Year who will benefit from \$5,000 in education and travel grants. The prize money is provided by ME Bank, a supporter of the awards since 2008.

The winners will be announced at a gala awards ceremony in Melbourne on Florence Nightingale's birthday – 12 May. Interstate finalists will be flown to Melbourne for the event at Crown Entertainment Complex.

HESTA is one of Australia's largest superannuation funds with more than 700,000 members. It is chosen by more people working in health and community services than any other fund.

Visit hestanursingawards.com to book tickets for the event or learn more about the awards.

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