

Gerontology Acceleration Programme increases understanding of the patient journey

Taking part in the Gerontology Acceleration Programme (GAP) has been an “amazing experience”, says Registered Nurse Rachel Leary.

“It has given me more of an understanding and appreciation of working in both a residential care facility and the acute setting. This increased knowledge can now be shared with my colleagues and current patients to facilitate a smoother transition between sectors.”

Rachel, who works in Ward D1 at Burwood Hospital, says as well as stepping out of her comfort zone to work in supportive environments to enhance her practice, she enjoyed the gerontology paper.

“We have so many knowledgeable people in Canterbury working in the gerontology field, who were so willing to share their knowledge.”

This has given her more of an understanding of gerontology as a speciality in nursing with unlimited opportunities for career development in the future, she says.

Rachel is one of three participants currently completing the 12-month programme. The others are Joe Senegan (Ward 24, Christchurch Hospital) and Michelle Bugayong (Bishop Selwyn Lifecare).

Applications for the 2018-2019 GAP are now open for registered nurses who have an interest in both career development and working with older people across the health care continuum.

The GAP aims to:

- Promote gerontology nursing as a specialty by providing skill acquisition and nursing knowledge in this area.
- Positively impact on clinical teaching, quality improvement and nursing leadership development in the sector.
- Provide an opportunity for collaboration across the system to foster a better understanding and positive relationships across different areas of the sector, both for the nurses undertaking the programme and their wider health networks.
- To retain talented Gerontology RNs, strengthening skill mix and flexibility within this workforce.

There have been 18 participants in GAP since its first cohort in 2013. A Ministry of Health evaluation of the GAP showed participants had developed confidence as leaders across the sector with an increased knowledge of the patient journey.



Registered Nurse Rachel Leary, who is taking part in the Gerontology Acceleration Programme

Participants go on to do quality roles, clinical coaching, and further work in the community, as well as enhancing day-to-day practice in their clinical environments.

Each of these participants has returned to their base clinical area to continue progressing their postgraduate study after completing two 12-week placements in each other's clinical areas.

To find out more about the GAP [click here](#)

The next GAP cohort commences mid-year 2018. Candidate applications are currently open and can be accessed here: [GAP Application Form 2018](#)

For any queries related to the GAP please contact Canterbury DHB Postgraduate Nursing Coordinator: Jacinda.King@cdhb.health.nz