

# **Telehealth: Improving Emergency Care in Rural and Remote Queensland**

**Matthew Barenveld<sup>1</sup>**, Lee Trenning<sup>2</sup>

1 Retrieval Services and Counter Disaster Unit, Mail Cluster 10.5, GPO Box 1425, Brisbane, QLD, 4031

2 Retrieval Services and Counter Disaster Unit, Mail Cluster 10.5, GPO Box 1425, Brisbane, QLD, 4031

## **Introduction**

Aeromedical retrieval of patients from rural and remote areas is not without inherent risks and difficulties for the retrieval team, the patient and their family. The Telehealth Emergency Management Support Unit (TEMSU) provides a 24 hour, coordinated service to improve access to emergency specialist and rural generalist advice for non-critical, emergency presentations using videoconferencing.

## **Methods**

A case presentation format, process narrative and data summary of the first 6 months of activity will be used to demonstrate how this collaborative and innovative telehealth model is being used to improve patient care and support aeromedical retrieval.

## **Results**

TEMSU commenced in December 2013 and is co-located with Retrieval Services Queensland (RSQ) in Brisbane. The service has been implemented across 3 Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) in Queensland with others to follow. Implementation has involved working with HHSs from the ground up involving both clinicians and management. By facilitating existing HHS referral processes and using a 'hub and spoke' model, TEMSU supports rural clinicians caring for patients in their own area. The external clinician can visualise the patient and provide assistance with clinical management and procedural care. Nursing support can also be provided to staff working in isolated practice, often mitigating the need to call senior colleagues, reducing clinician fatigue and facilitating workforce-planning capability. Executives and clinicians alike have shown great enthusiasm for TEMSU.

## **Conclusion**

TEMSU provides support and assistance to rural and remote medical and nursing clinicians resulting in more effective health care delivery and patient focused care as well as facilitating more effective use of aeromedical retrieval assets.

## **Funding / Acknowledgments**

Nil Funding

## **Key Words**

Retrieval

Telehealth

Aeromedical Retrieval

Rural

Remote

Emergency

Accident

Hospital and Health Service

