**What we discovered: implementing weekend diabetes education service during COVID-19 surge**

**Background & Aim**

During COVID – 19 pandemic, our health service in Western Suburbs of Melbourne, established a short-term weekend diabetes education service to address the surge in hospital admissions. The initiative funded by DHHS, ran from June 4th until September 24th, 2022, with a dedicated Diabetes Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) working 6 hours on a Saturday. Our diabetes education service routinely operates from Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. Patients with diabetes may present at any time resulting in delayed discharges waiting for self-management education.

**Methods**

Data collected using Redcap survey enabled measurement of the effectiveness of this innovative service. The service was available across the two major campuses within the organization. The survey captured data from the following areas;

* Patient’s hospital ID
* Referring clinician role
* Ward location
* Type of Diabetes
* Referral Outcome

**Results**

Diabetes CNC received 46 referrals from

* inpatient wards (36),
* Emergency Department (6)
* ICU (2),
* Response, Assessment Discharge (1),
* Maternity Assessment unit (1)

Referral Outcome:

of the 46 referrals, total of 15 patients were discharged home and 1 patient entered a respite facility.

**Discussion/Conclusion**

Working collaboratively with the afterhours clinicians, diabetes CNC was able to facilitate early discharges from the emergency departments (ED) and from the inpatient ward areas to increase bed availability and better utilization of resources. Disseminating the service availability to the medical teams across all campuses proved challenging. Hence the service was mostly utilised by the Endocrinology team. The weekend diabetes CNC education service proved to be a cost-effective solution by lowering hospital’s overall costs associated with prolonged inpatient care.  Timely discharge of patients contributed to more efficient patient flow in ED and inpatient wards by creating bed availability. This innovative approach exemplifies how targeted services can lead to better outcomes in challenging times.