



MEDIA RELEASE

Telehealth service for stroke patients in New England

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Thousands of regional stroke patients, including those in the New England, will have a second chance at life with 24/7 access to life-saving treatment under a \$21.7 million investment from the Federal Liberal Nationals Government and the NSW Government to deliver a state-wide telehealth service.

Member for New England, Barnaby Joyce, said the service will deliver faster treatment to the 4,250 patients in regional NSW who will have a stroke this year.

“Being assessed and receiving treatment for a stroke is absolutely time critical and I want to ensure every patient no matter where they live, from Ashford to Quirindi, has quick access to specialist care so they have the best possible outcome,” Mr Joyce said.

“Alongside our delivery of 3,354 Medicare-funded MRI services for Tamworth Hospital, this tele-health, real-time expert assessment and treatment can mean the difference between life-long disability and a person being able to recover to a normal life.”

People generally think of stroke as something experienced in old age, but stroke occurs across the community, including little babies, children, and young adults. If nothing else, people should remember the FAST test if stroke is suspected – Face: Check their face. Has their mouth drooped? Arms: Can they lift both arms? Speech: Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you? Time: Is critical. If you see any of these signs call 000 straight away.

Stroke telehealth services have been shown to vastly improve the prognosis for regional and rural patients by enabling earlier diagnosis and appropriate therapy.

Mr Joyce said a roster of neurologists/stroke physicians will use telehealth technology to remotely access a stroke patient’s medical images and conduct a remote consultation to determine a treatment plan.

The \$21.7 million Centralised Stroke Telehealth Service to be rolled out over three years will provide 24/7 access to specialist clinical advice for the management of acute ischaemic stroke patients at regional and rural hospitals.

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Hon **Barnaby Joyce** MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt said the Coalition Government had contributed \$9.4 million to this important service, which will enable stroke patients to be assessed in regional hospital emergency departments by a virtual stroke physician.

“Together, the local emergency physician and the virtual stroke physician will assess, diagnose and determine the appropriate treatment plan for the patient. Where possible, initial treatment will be provided locally,” Mr Hunt said.

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