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Media release 1 May 2013

Northern Territory nurse a finalist in national nursing awards

A Northern Territory nurse working with remote community patients with crusted scabies — a highly infectious and debilitating form of scabies — has been named one of the five finalists in the Nurse of the Year category of the 2013 HESTA Australian Nursing Awards.

Ms Faye Alvoen has been recognised as a finalist for her work with patients in remote communities who have the damaging skin condition.

The Nurse of the Year Award recognises a nurse, midwife, personal care attendant or assistant in nursing who has made an exceptional contribution to improving patient care, delivered health care in challenging circumstances and shown advocacy on behalf of patients or the nursing profession.

Ms Alvoen, of the non-profit organisation One Disease at a Time, has worked to reduce the impact of crusted scabies which, if left untreated, can lead to social isolation and permanent damage.

“I work with patients and their families to reduce the frequency and severity of relapse. When a patient with crusted scabies relapses they continually infest any people who live in close quarters with scabies. Children are particularly affected by these recurrent bouts and can be bullied, suffer from severe sleeping difficulties and face exclusion from school,” Ms Alvoen said.

“By moving to a chronic care management approach to crusted scabies, close contacts and family members experience far fewer repeat episodes of scabies infection. The patients and their family members can lead full lives again.”

The judges commended the nomination for highlighting the work of a dedicated nurse who thinks more of her clients’ needs than her own. They also praised her ground-breaking work showing that, in a scabies endemic area, crusted scabies can only be treated with chronic care management.

Ms Alvoen and the other finalists will be flown to Melbourne to attend an awards dinner, where the winners will be announced on 9 May 2013.

A \$30,000 prize pool will be shared among the winners, courtesy of long-term HESTA awards sponsor, ME Bank. The Nurse of the Year and Outstanding Graduate Award winners will each receive a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant. The Team Innovation Award winner will receive a \$10,000 development grant.

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 750,000 members and \$22 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

Visit hestaawards.com.au for tickets to the awards dinner or to learn more about the awards.

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