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Victorian on a ‘mental health mission’ wins national primary health award

A Victorian who set up his own small ‘army’ of mental health nurses throughout eastern Melbourne has won the Individual Distinction Award at the 2013 HESTA Primary Health Care Awards.

Craig Maloney — of Eastern Melbourne Medicare Local — won the award for demonstrating progress on achieving a vision for Australian health care that is innovative and will lead to better community health care.

Mr Maloney created a new regional service model to identify individuals and groups failing to access mental health services and took action to bring services into areas of need.

The Mental Health Nurse Service brought trained nurses into GP practices, secondary schools, drug and alcohol services, maternal and child health services, youth services and psychiatric disability rehabilitation services leading to improved patient outcomes.

The Service also established a mental health nurse and wellbeing program at Worowa Aboriginal College — a Healesville-based boarding school for Aboriginal girls from all over Australia.

The awards recognise the dedication and professionalism of those working in primary health care, including physiotherapists, dentists, pharmacists, therapists, GPs, rehabilitation professionals, health educators and medical practice managers.

Mr Maloney and his mental health nursing team integrated service delivery across three national programs, to ensure patients didn’t ‘fall through gaps’ and came up with new protocols and management procedures to optimise opportunities for clients’ sustained recovery.

HESTA CEO, Anne-Marie Corboy, congratulated the winners of each category.

“The judges received nominations from around the country and had a difficult decision choosing 13 outstanding finalists. The winners are a credit to their organisations and are all contributing to improved community health outcomes, often in areas of high need,” Ms Corboy said.

The winners of the 2013 HESTA Primary Health Care Awards were announced at an awards dinner in Melbourne on 6 June.

Mr Maloney and the Young Leader Award winner each accepted a \$5,000 ME Bank *Everyday* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant — courtesy of long-term HESTA awards sponsor ME Bank. The Team Excellence winner received a \$10,000 development grant, also courtesy of ME Bank.

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.

To learn more about the award, visit hestaawards.com.au

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