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For immediate release

New Wilson Home initiative gives younger patients a voice to be heard

Fourteen-year-old Wilson Home inpatient Martina Roa says it's good to know her opinion counts.

She is among children and teens at the Takapuna-based child rehabilitation service being encouraged to provide feedback about their healthcare experiences as part of Everyone Matters – Hearing the Child's Voice.

The new Waitemata DHB initiative gives young patients the opportunity to comment through a range of age-appropriate options.

Martina has used an iPad to complete the Friends and Family Test survey that was once reserved for parents and caregivers only.

"I am pleased that I can give my point of view," she says. "Other people make decisions for you when you're younger so it's nice to be able to have my say."

Martina has a long association with Wilson Home and has been there for a number of weeks this year after spending four months in Starship. Her mother, Sandra Nunez, is staying with her in the parent accommodation.

"I like it," Martina says. "We are close to everything and I have Mum here to support me."

Wilson Home Children's Rehabilitation Service Charge Nurse Manager Pamela Marino says inviting direct feedback from young patients complements existing efforts to get them setting goals around their own care plans.

"We want them to tell us what their goals are rather than us telling them what they should be," she says.

Stephanie Doe, General Manager of Waitemata DHB's Child, Women and Family Services, says efforts to engage better with younger patients contribute directly to service improvements and better health outcomes.

"Even very young children have views and perspectives and their expression of these can contribute positively to their wellbeing," she says.

"There is also now a growing body of evidence showing that taking children's views and experiences into account helps develop their self-esteem, cognitive skills and respect for others."

Waitemata DHB CEO Dr Dale Bramley says the initiative complements the various feedback options already made available to adult patients and aligns directly with the organisation's values, particularly "everyone matters".

"Our Child Health Services have worked hard to build on this by ensuring these young voices are heard as part of the assessment and care planning process," he says.

"Every single one of our patients matters greatly to us and this kind of engagement helps us in our continual efforts to deliver the very best level of healthcare that we possibly can."

Ends

Caption: l-r, Sandra Nunez, Martina Roa and Pamela Marino pictured at the Wilson Home Children's Rehabilitation Service in Takapuna

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