

Nightingales of the road

DISTRICT nurses play a vital role in the health and welfare of the community.

They provide an essential service to thousands of people, visiting them in their homes to provide medical care.

Anthony Stephanidis is a district nurse at Melbourne's Royal District Nursing Service.

The 35-year-old registered nurse had experience in hospitals before becoming a district nurse. He has been with the service for six months and is enthusiastic about his new role.

"It is very rewarding being out in the community. I feel like I am making a positive contribution."

Stephanidis worked as a pastry cook for nine years before taking up nursing.

He did a bridging course to gain entry to university. At 29, he began a nursing degree at Australian Catholic University.

"I am finding nursing more rewarding than my previous work," he says.

His interest in community nursing was sparked while he was on work experience at RDNS Yarra Centre during his nursing studies.

"I was interested in working in the community but I wanted to gain nursing skills in the hospital setting first."

He worked as a registered nurse for five years in both the private and public sectors before joining the RDNS Moreland Centre.

Now he visits about 10-15 clients a day, working day shifts Monday to Friday and every fourth weekend.

NURSING By LOUISE HATTAM

He visits clients in Moreland district, travelling as far as Sunbury and Craigieburn.

RDNS gives him a car, mobile phone and laptop computer for documenting and accessing client medical data.

"We care for people with different conditions and from varied age brackets. You feel privileged that people let you into their home."

"A common theme is that people want to stay at home. We care for the elderly who are not quite managing at home and we can help them to stay there a bit longer."

He has a keen interest in palliative care. "I have a lot of palliative clients. A lot of families would prefer them to be at home if they can," he says.

He plans to complete a Graduate Certificate in Palliative Care next year.

"A big part of our job is teaching clients to manage themselves at home. We assist with IV antibiotics, catheter management and diabetes education."

District nurses can also care for people with acute conditions requiring complicated nursing procedures at home.

RDNS employs 1018 district nurses, of which 60 are male. RDNS offers a graduate nurse program.



Briefing: Anthony Stephanidis gives Peter and Ismini Hatzimoisis facts on diabetes. Picture: MANUELA CIFRA

IN SHORT

Drug response

■ The pharmaceutical industry in Australia is worth more than \$6 billion annually.

Now a new course is aiming to help people get a slice of the pie.

The course is called the Road Scholars Pharmaceutical Sales Program. It is conducted over a full day, at a cost of \$350 (plus GST)

During the course students will learn about: the industry; Medicines Australia; the role of the representative; positioning yourself for your next role beyond repping; selling skills; developing effective cover letters and resumes; interviewing skills.

This course is heavy on specifics and can be tailored to the specific needs of the student.

It has been specifically put together to help candidates demonstrate those skills and knowledge the recruiters will be looking for in interviews.

For more information, contact Daniele Lima from Gotham, ph: 9576 8486 or 0413 297 617