

Physiologist is all heart

By Mark Barbeliuk

THE work of an exercise physiologist at Sutherland Hospital who has made an incredible difference to the health and well-being of patients has been recognised nationally.

Lorraine Falecki, 27, works in the hospital's cardiac rehabilitation unit and is the National Exercise Physiologist of the Year for 2009.

She was presented with her award at the Exercise and Sport Science Association's conference at the Gold Coast this month.

A Sutherland Hospital spokeswoman said hospital exercise physiologists played an integral role in preventative disease management and kept people from being re-admitted to hospital.

Ms Falecki said her work involved assessing patients and developing suitable exercise programs for those with heart conditions.

"Under my supervision, these individualised exercise programs are implemented and upgraded gradually in our fully-equipped gymnasium," she said. "When patients cannot attend our gymnasium program, individualised home programs are provided, along with follow up on their progress."



Making a difference: Lorraine Falecki with her award.

Picture: Lisa McMahon

'It's about helping people help themselves and to live well with their chronic disease'

Lorraine Falecki

Ms Falecki and her colleagues were redesigning rehabilitation and secondary prevention programs to ensure more flexible and personalised programs were available for patients.

"Education, counselling and motivating people on healthy lifestyle practices is an important part of my role," Ms Falecki said.

"It's about helping people help themselves and to live well with their chronic disease and enhance their quality of life.

"Receiving the National Exercise Physiologist of the Year Award is a great honour and an opportunity to gain recognition of the exercise physiology profession."

Ms Falecki said it was important to raise awareness of the work exercise physiologists do in improving the continuity of care for the chronic management of heart disease.