RPA Virtual Hospital
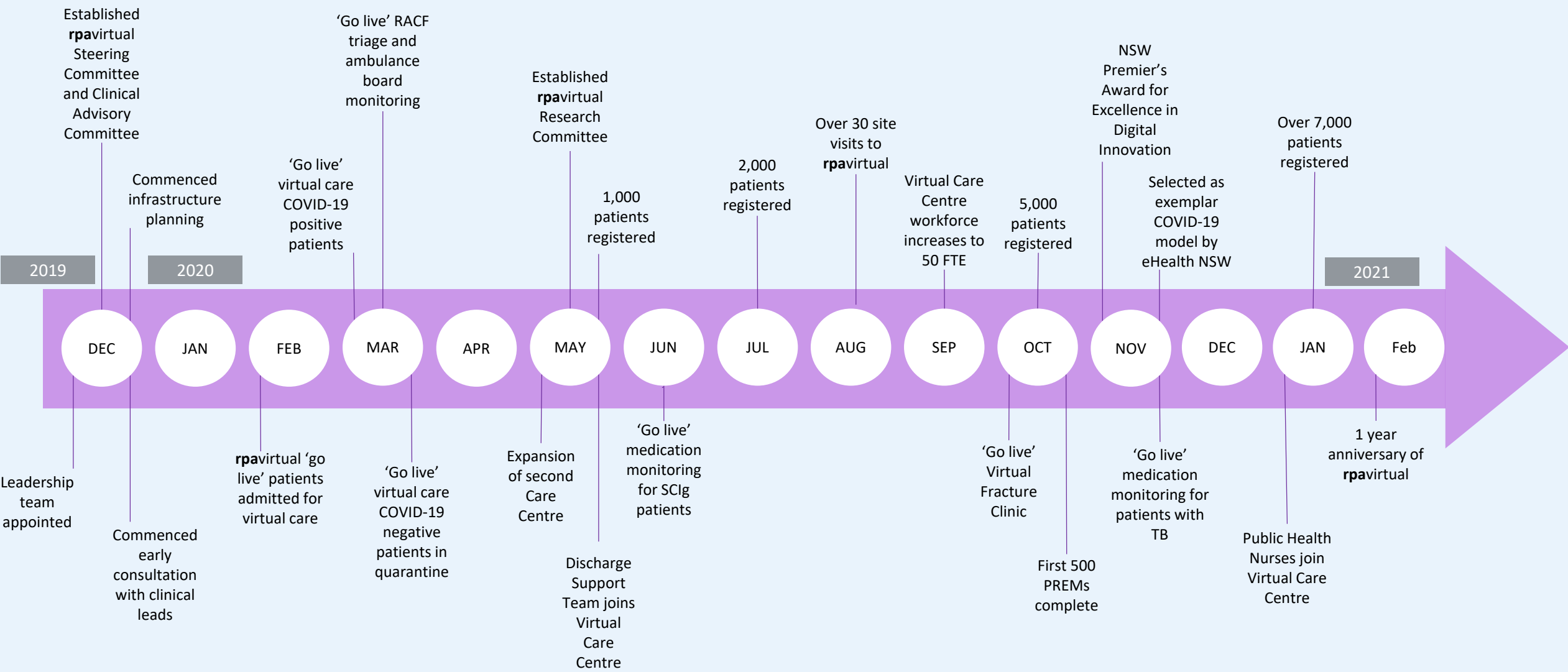
A perspective from Sydney, Australia

Dr Owen Hutchings, Clinical Director, RPA Virtual Hospital

The journey so far…

2019

Established **rpa**virtual Steering Committee and Clinical Advisory Committee

Leadership team appointed

Commenced infrastructure planning

Commenced early consultation with clinical leads

2020

'Go live' virtual care COVID-19 positive patients

rpavirtual 'go live' patients admitted for virtual care

'Go live' RACF triage and ambulance board monitoring

'Go live' virtual care COVID-19 negative patients in quarantine

Established **rpa**virtual Research Committee

Expansion of second Care Centre

Discharge Support Team joins Virtual Care Centre

1,000 patients registered

'Go live' medication monitoring for SCIg patients

2,000 patients registered

Over 30 site visits to **rpa**virtual

Virtual Care Centre workforce increases to 50 FTE

5,000 patients registered

'Go live' Virtual Fracture Clinic

First 500 PREMs complete

NSW Premier's Award for Excellence in Digital Innovation

Selected as exemplar COVID-19 model by eHealth NSW

'Go live' medication monitoring for patients with TB

Over 7,000 patients registered

2021

Public Health Nurses join Virtual Care Centre

1 year anniversary of **rpa**virtual

DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | Feb

Features of **rpa**virtual

- District-wide service (> 670,000 residents in 126km^2)
- Executive structure similar to traditional hospital – General Manager, Clinical Director, DON
- 24/7 Virtual Care Centre to respond to deteriorating patients with 1800# and on-call medical roster
- Multidisciplinary Care Centre team complemented by 'on the ground' Sydney District Nursing team
- Local relationships with 'bricks and mortar' hospital specialists support safe and effective virtual models of care with agreed and documented in-person assessment, referral and escalation pathways
- Menzies Centre for Health Policy commissioned to conduct the evaluation – final report due April 2021
- RPA Virtual Hospital Research Steering Committee contributes to the evidence for innovative, effective, and sustainable models of virtual care through high quality research and evaluation
- Collaboration and communication with general practice
- **rpa**virtual Consumer Network ensures collaborative partnerships with consumers at all levels

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Successes and challenges

Successes

- First virtual hospital in NSW – informed state-wide virtual care strategy
- Robust governance model with comprehensive documented clinical models of care and protocols with decision making algorithms to support patient management
- Provision of care to 11,584 unique patients – 1,890 COVID-19 positive and 4,774 COVID-19 negative patients in health hotel quarantine*
- Patient experience data – 85% of patients rate care as excellent or good
- 2020 NSW Premier's Award for Excellence in Digital Innovation

Challenges

- Realising the potential of a virtual hospital outside the pandemic – >90% of patients pandemic related
- Funding classifications – current non-admitted outpatient classification has limitations
- Integration and expansion of new technologies within existing IT systems

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*Data updated 14 April 2021

What does the future look like?

- Planning/scoping of new models of care/programs underway:
  - Feasibility trial of remote monitoring uncomplicated acute diverticulitis patients
  - Virtual minor trauma follow-up clinic
  - Expand virtual fracture clinic to include all SLHD hospital EDs and direct GP referral
  - Virtual rehab model
  - Virtual low back pain care post-discharge from hospital
  - Virtual care for patients with chronic headache
  - AI to assess wounds and recommend treatment
  - Coordination and oversight of District's Potentially Preventable Hospitalisations program
  - Expand palliative symptom monitoring and health maintenance programs
  - Virtual ICU ('eICU') care for patients in smaller rural hospitals

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