

LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES UNITE TO SUPPORT ELDERLY UNDER FEDERAL HOME CARE REFORMS

EMBARGO: 5.4.2018

Event: Official launch of local Home Care health service consortium 'Community Interlink'

When: 7.30am – 8.15am Thursday 5th April 2018

Where: Club Mulwala Melbourne Street, Mulwala NSW

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A Home Care Package is an Australian Government funding subsidy awarded to seniors for the purchase of services to enable them to remain in their own home.

In what is believed to be an Australian first, 18 health services from across the region have united for the sustainability of locally governed Home Care (aged care at home) for senior members of their communities.

Following 2015 Commonwealth Home Care funding reforms, resulting in a new open marketplace for Home Care providers, many smaller health services would find it challenging to continue providing Home Care.

A consortium arrangement between the health services, would guarantee each member's ability to continue providing Home Care to their communities.

To date, 18 health services from northern and central Victoria and southern New South Wales have joined the consortium, collectively branded: 'Community Interlink'.

"Basically we wanted to ensure that senior members of our communities would always have access to Home Care services from a locally governed provider," says Community Interlink Governance Group member, Gordon Ross.

"Local providers are those that can offer the highest level of support having local staff, with local knowledge and networks."

Community Interlink members include: Northeast Health Wangaratta, Gateway Health, GV Health, Beechworth Health Service, Euroa Health, **Nathalia Health**, **Numurkah District Health Service**, Benalla Health, Seymour Health, **Yarrawonga Health**, Mansfield District Hospital, **Indigo North Health**, Yea & District Memorial Hospital, Albury Wodonga Health, Tallangatta Health Service, Nexus Primary Health, Alexandra District Hospital and Kilmore & District Hospital.



Community Interlink Governance Group Chair, Suzanne Miller says:

“When we received news of the Home Care reforms, regional health services had concerns regarding the open marketplace, the state of aged care supports at home, and the potential level of detachment with the local public health services that could result,’

“After the competitive marketplace was launched, in some small regional areas there were suddenly dozens of new Home Care providers, mostly outsider national, even foreign companies, who had little or no connection to the community concerned or the current health sector,’

“The primary goal of the consortium is to build on a shared philosophy and commitment to supporting local communities via local health services,’

“The focus is to build on the services’ capacity and track record of sustainable support to people at the point of need,’

“Capacity building is achieved by securing contracts for the delivery of health and wellbeing services within communities and ensuring revenue is managed through a joint approach to the service model,’

“The consortium works toward building the capacity of member agencies to deliver direct care and coordinated care from their own employed staff, and to open up new contracting opportunities and

consolidate existing revenue streams, promoting joint working and encouraging organizational learning and development,’

“The consortium now supports approximately 300 Home Care clients regionally, with care coordinated via staff employed at the various health services (members),’

“The consortium model has great potential to support local people across the range of available Commonwealth Home Support Programs and NDIS into the future. This will ensure our fantastic range of public health services stay connected to their communities in this rapid time of social reform,’

“They are all separate, independent agencies with their own management and accountability structures and with their own unique way of operating. The differences and independence will be protected and strengthened under the value base of strong locally governed health and wellbeing services.”

Yarrawonga Health CEO, Elaine Mallows says:

“Home Care Packages benefit older Australians in our region by assisting them to live actively in the community and in their own home, as long as they are able to and while supporting them as their needs change and grow,’

“The consortium arrangement guarantees that older people within our community will always have access to Home Care via their local provider, whom they recognise and trust.”



Numurkah District Health Service CEO, Jacque Phillips says:

“More and more older Australians are wanting to remain living in their own homes for as long as possible. Home Care Packages enable them to do just that,”

“The consortium alliance provides the assurance that the local community will always have access to Home Care from a local provider.”

Indigo North Health CEO, Shane Kirk says:

“Many people are choosing to remain in their own home as they age, as opposed to entering an aged care facility,”

“The Community Interlink consortium will guarantee that older members of our community can be supported in this way by a local provider.”

The Community Interlink consortium official launch in Mulwala tomorrow is the fourth in a series of five official Community Interlink launches being held within the Community Interlink servicing area.

Local general practitioners, allied health and medical clinics staff are invited to the launches.

Other launches include:

Shepparton- February 22, 2018
Eastbank Centre
Welsford Street

Wangaratta – March 15, 2018
Rinaldo’s Casa Cucina
Faithfull Street

Wodonga - March 1, 2018
Huron Hill Hotel
Reid Street

Kilmore - April 12, 2018
Kilmore Trackside
East Street

Celebration of the launches will continue with Community Interlink Client Luncheons being held on the same day of each official launch.



INFORMATION REGARDING HOME CARE FUNDING

Home Care Package recipients must select an approved provider, such as Community Interlink, to activate and manage their Home Care Package.

They may then purchase approved services with their funding package such as domestic support (meal preparation, cleaning, home modifications to meet care needs), transport, personal care (assistance with showering/bathing, getting in and out of bed, getting dressed/undressed), support to go shopping and run errands, allied health, medications management, home nursing, sourcing of hearing, mobility, visual and continence aides, support to attend social outings and events.

If a person is not eligible for a Home Care Package, they can purchase Home Care services privately via Community Interlink.

In view of limited community awareness about what Home Care funding is and how a person may access it, a presentation and information flyer will be given to all in attendance about the provision, the eligibility and the application process.

A PDF copy of this flyer is attached and may be published with modifications approved by Community Interlink.

