

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

**EMBARGO: 15.3.2018**

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

**When:** 7.30am – 8.15am Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**Where:** Rinaldo's Casa Cucina 56-58 Faithfull Street, Wangaratta VIC

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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, 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, 19 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, Natalia Health, Numurkah District Health Service, Benalla Health, Seymour Health, Yarrowonga Health, Mansfield District Hospital, GV Health, Indigo North Health, Yea & District Memorial Hospital, Albury Wodonga Health, Tallangatta Health Service, Nexus Primary Health, Alexandra District Hospital, Nagambie Healthcare 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.”

Gateway Health CEO, Leigh Rhode says:

“Gateway Health’s membership in the consortium will guarantee locally-governed Home Care services for senior members of our communities into the future,’

“This reflects our organisation’s core focus on the provision of primary health and welfare services to people at highest risk of poor health outcomes.”



Benalla Health CEO Janine Holland says:

“It’s important to be progressive about aged care at this point in time,”

“Australia-wide we are going seeing a shift towards more seniors wanting to remain in their own home, rather than entering an aged care facility,”

“The consortium model ensures that local people will have access to the support they need, at a local level, for just that.”

**The Community Interlink consortium official launch in Wangaratta today is the third 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

Yarrawonga - April 5, 2018  
Club Mulwala  
271 Melbourne Street

Wodonga - March 1, 2018  
Huon Hill Hotel  
Reid Street

Kilmore - April 12, 2018  
Kilmore Trackside  
East Street



## **INFORMATION REGARDING HOME CARE FUNDING**

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.

A Home Care Package is an Australian Government funding subsidy that allows individuals to purchase services to enable them to live independently in their own home.

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 attends 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.

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

