

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW TOOL FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT

Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA), the peak national body representing allied health professionals, has developed a new, quick-guide chronic disease management resource package for general practitioners, general practice nurses and allied health professionals to support multidisciplinary teamwork. It is aimed at achieving improved outcomes for people with chronic and complex conditions. Available online (www.cdm.ahpa.com.au) and in hard copy, it is an informational resource package containing information on:

- Allied health professions included in Medicare's chronic disease management items, including services and qualifications
- Medicare requirements for patient eligibility, service requirements and processes
- Examples of how healthcare teams for chronic diseases could be structured, potential treatments and triggers for referral
- Communications tools
- Instant access into allied health professionals association's directories, providing national coverage.

The tool is a one-stop-shop for busy healthcare professionals who need to access concise information quickly. A printer-friendly version of the resource package is downloadable from the website.

A DVD highlights the benefits of multidisciplinary care with healthcare professionals discussing their own experiences and is downloadable from the site and available with the hard copies.

Dr Morton Rawlin, Vice President of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and Chair of the Victorian Faculty, said that the new resource would be an important tool to support people working in chronic disease management.

"The prevalence of chronic disease is putting an immense strain on Australia's health care system and this will increase with the growing, ageing population," he said. "Multidisciplinary teams which include healthcare professionals with different skills-sets to care for people with chronic and complex conditions will ensure that patients receive the most appropriate treatment. This information contained in this new resource should facilitate setting up the most effective multidisciplinary teams."

Professor Lyn Littlefield, Executive Director of the Australian Psychological Society and Executive Officer of AHPA, said that there is an increasing number of allied health professionals graduating each year in Australia.

Members: Audiological Society of Australia, Australasian Podiatry Council, Australian Association for Exercise and Sports Science, Australian Association of Social Workers, Australian Institute of Radiography, Australian Orthotic and Prosthetic Association, Australian Psychological Society, Australian Sonographers Association, Dietitians Association of Australia, OT AUSTRALIA, Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Inc, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, Speech Pathology Australia, The Orthoptic Association of Australia.

Associates: Australian Diabetes Educators Association.

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“Their skills and services should be recognised and understood as they could contribute substantially to the efficiency of the Australian healthcare system. This new tool provides quick access to information on what allied health professionals can bring to the process,” she said.

Belinda Caldwell, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Practice Nurses Association, said that the new resource would be very useful to the growing number of general practice nurses.

“General practice nurses have an important role to play in coordinating multidisciplinary teams in chronic disease management,” she said. “The new resource will provide really useful information to assist them.”

The development of the resource package was funded by the Australia Better Health Initiative, a joint Australian, State and Territory government initiative.”

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