



HealthLinks: Chronic Care

Overview

People with chronic and complex health needs are often frequent users of hospital services. Integrated community-based care and active management can result in better outcomes for these people and may reduce their need for hospitalisation.

A number of Victorian public hospitals are implementing HealthLinks: Chronic Care. Under the initiative, hospitals have more flexibility in the type of care they provide to people with chronic and complex health needs who have a high risk of multiple unplanned hospitalisations.

How it works

Participating health services receive a portion of their activity-based funding as a separate grant that they can use to deliver a flexible suite of services to patients who have chronic and complex health needs. The funding is not new or additional.

Health services can use the funding flexibly to design their service model around what will best suit patients and the organisational environment. Health services might focus on better streaming to existing programs and services (clinical and social) or establishing new service models for community-based management. Services can be delivered inside or outside the hospital.

While there will be considerable differences in the approaches taken across health services, there will be some commonalities as well. In particular there will be a stronger focus on integrating services and intervening early to prevent people from re-presenting to hospital.

What it means for patients

For some patients there will be no change to the type of care they receive when they are enrolled in HealthLinks: Chronic Care.

For some patients, there may be a difference in the types of services they are offered. This could be a different range of services delivered in their home or in the community. Health services can tailor services to the specific needs of the patient.

Health services will continue to deliver the most appropriate services for each patient.

Measuring the effectiveness of HealthLinks: Chronic Care

The Department of Health and Human Services will evaluate the initiative in partnership with the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and participating health services. The evaluation aims to examine whether offering flexible funding to health services enables them to develop and implement alternative models that provide better experiences and outcomes for patients with chronic and complex conditions at equal or lower cost.

Want to know more?

The department's *Policy and funding guidelines* includes a section on HealthLinks: Chronic Care at <<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/policy-and-funding-guidelines>> (see volume 2, Chapter 2, pp. 87–91).

More information on HealthLinks: Chronic Care is available at <<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/integrated-chronic-care>> or by contacting the HealthLinks project team at:

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