

CENTRAL HUME PHARMACY PROJECT

BACKGROUND

The Central Hume Pharmacy Project was completed over an 8 month period from May to December 2018. In the Central Hume catchment area (Alpine, Benalla, Mansfield and Wangaratta Local Government Areas) diabetes, heart disease and respiratory conditions are highly prevalent diseases.

Local community pharmacies and pharmacists are often the first point of call for clients as they are the health professionals who see clients most frequently (typically at least once a month to fill prescriptions for regular medications) and are often utilised as a free consultation service. Pharmacists can contribute to monitoring of clients between GP and specialist appointments, and should be seen as part of the whole primary health care team.

This project sought to connect the sixteen (16) local community pharmacies in Central Hume to Alpine Health, Benalla Health, Mansfield District Hospital, Northeast Health Wangaratta and Gateway Health Wangaratta.

The purpose of making these connections is to enhance information access between services and the community by strengthening integration, and improving communication among providers.

PARTNERS



16 local pharmacies

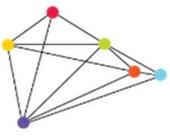
Chronic Disease Expert Panel included representatives from Alpine Health, Benalla Health, Mansfield District Hospital, Northeast Health Wangaratta, and Gateway Health

METHOD

Face to face visits were made to each of the 16 local pharmacies to explore opportunities through discussion. This was followed up with a survey containing a series of questions regarding the current involvement and services offered to customers/clients who present at their pharmacy with chronic conditions, and potential supports that would be of value to these pharmacies.

At each face to face visit the pharmacies were given packs, which were tailor made for each local government area and provided tangible resources for each pharmacy.

Utilising existing relationships with health services formed by the Central Hume PCP, a Chronic Disease Expert Panel comprising healthcare professionals from across the catchment area was established. The Panel assisted with direction to the local support groups and provided a variety of expertise, knowledge and experience.



A directory of local support groups was created for each local government area. These groups included cardiac rehabilitation programs, pulmonary rehabilitation programs, diabetes information and support groups, LIFE! Program and other maintenance groups run by primary healthcare professionals using evidence based programs in local health services. Phone interviews with primary healthcare staff were conducted to gain information on local support groups at their health service, to share with the pharmacies.

The directory was emailed to all key contacts from the local pharmacies as a way to share what and where local support groups are in the catchment to further develop relationships across health services.

Additionally, a targeted Summary of Health Literacy Online Learning Modules for Pharmacists was developed in collaboration with Goulburn Valley Primary Care Partnership (GVPCP) to empower pharmacies to use health literacy principles with their clients.

OUTCOMES

Project Outcomes

- Recognition of the role of pharmacies in providing education and support to assist people with chronic conditions to self-manage.
- Primary healthcare and pharmacy staff have increased awareness of each other's role in relation to chronic disease management.

Resources developed

- Creation and distribution of a directory of local support groups in each local government area for clients with or at risk of developing diabetes, heart disease and respiratory conditions. The local support group directory is a start for facilitating information access between services, and assists pharmacies to direct their clients to services in their local community.

Partnerships and Collaborations with other organisations

- All sixteen (16) local community pharmacies participated in this voluntary project.
- Development, in collaboration with Goulburn Valley PCP, of a targeted summary of Health Literacy Online Learning Modules for pharmacies.
- Assisted Gateway Health with an article from pharmacies regarding smoking cessation for North East Media Health & Wellbeing Lift Out newspaper.
- Chronic Disease Expert Panel included representatives from Alpine Health, Benalla Health, Mansfield District Hospital, Northeast Health Wangaratta and Gateway Health to ensure high quality support and feedback regarding chronic disease management and the overall success of the project.

In addition, a number of direct quotes from Pharmacists highlights the success of this project:

"This project has assisted with changing the way we think, and thinking about the other networks that support the patient/client – rather than just GPs"

"This pack will be very useful especially the local support groups"

"I will contact all the local support groups on the list and utilise all resources provided"

"It is all about making those connections"