CATCH program provides invaluable support for regional cardiac patients

A telephone support program is providing regional and rural South Australian cardiac patients with vital access to health professionals – and potentially lifesaving advice.

The CATCH (Country Access to Cardiac Health) program enables those living in country South Australia who have had a cardiac event to access the same level of follow up support as those in metropolitan areas.

Country SA PHN, which exists to bridge the gap of health equity in regional South Australia, has funded the program as part of efforts to prevent subsequent attacks and to reduce the number of preventable hospitalisations.

“There’s very strong research which shows that if people don’t access a health professional following a cardiac event they have a much higher chance of experiencing another attack or even dying,” said Country SA PHN Manager of State Partnerships, Jenny Philip-Harbutt.

“The phone service provides this access in the form of regular contact for a set period following their discharge from hospital and means the patient is supported by a qualified health professional well after they go home.”

When a country cardiac patient is discharged from hospital they are referred to a specialist nurse for follow up. Over a two-month period, patients receive tailored health advice - ranging from nutrition to pharmacology and lifestyle changes – via seven phone consultations.

“Interestingly, we are finding that many people seem to be much more comfortable and therefore honest when doing these consultations over the phone so the long terms benefits are certainly looking very promising,” Ms Philip-Harbutt said.

“The CATCH program was rolled out in the middle of this year and we will continue to track and monitor patient outcomes over the coming months. It’s certainly been very exciting to have implemented what is a simple yet highly effective service for regional South Australians.”

Country SA PHN is responsible for commissioning Commonwealth directed funding for primary health services throughout regional South Australia.

Country SA PHN is the health network set up to service the country regions of South Australia, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery while improving the coordination of patient care. Established by the Australian Government, we exist to bridge the gap of health inequity and access in rural South Australia by building a collaborative and responsive health care system. Country SA PHN covers 99.8% of the state geographically, incorporating approximately 30% of South Australia’s total population.

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