

Our vision is for Tasmanians to live well, live longer and with greater peace of mind, through improvements to the prevention, detection and management of chronic disease.

CHRONIC DISEASE IN TASMANIA

While Tasmanians enjoy an enviable quality of life, we fall below the national average in some important health and lifestyle measures and have higher levels of disease and disability.

In particular, chronic disease is increasing at an alarming rate in Tasmania.

Chronic disease can limit a person's ability to work; reduce their engagement with family and community life; increase medication use and health service visits; and lead to other illnesses, particularly depression.

Over the next four years, we will improve existing services and find new and better ways to deliver services that help prevent, detect and manage chronic disease in Tasmania.

I'm reasonably young and want to enjoy life; and while I have to live with this disease, I'm determined it's not going to control my life.

TRACEY KLIPPEL, LAUNCESTON

Many factors influence the development and advance of chronic disease. We can prevent many chronic diseases or reduce their impact if we eat healthy food, limit alcohol use, increase our physical activity and quit smoking.

Some people are at increased risk of developing a chronic condition because of social and economic disadvantage or other circumstances in life. These include Aboriginal people and people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, families and carers of people with chronic disease, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, homeless people and people with disabilities, mental illness or in the criminal justice system.

While age itself is not a risk factor for ill health, the rate of chronic disease and the need for services and support increases significantly for people over 65 years.

Chronic diseases usually come on gradually, but not always; they can occur at any age, but are more usual in older age; and they often impact on quality of life.

Chronic conditions are usually long-term and persistent; may lead to a gradual decline of health; and while usually not immediately life threatening, they are the most common cause of early death.



DEALING DIFFERENTLY WITH CHRONIC DISEASE

In the past, healthcare was designed to deal with acute illness and injury as it happened and usually in hospitals. This reactive style of healthcare is now struggling to cope with the many people who live with a chronic disease and who have to regularly see a range of healthcare professionals.

A system is needed that improves service equity and is innovative and diverse, and removes barriers to access. Patients and their carers must have more control of their care through self-management programs and approaches.

Now and into the future, healthcare services must prevent or reduce the impact of chronic disease and support people to live well in their community for as long as possible.

Services must not only treat people for their presenting condition but also recognise other needs or conditions to improve the overall effectiveness of treatment. The system of care must be built around the patient or client rather than the organisations that deliver care.

Many countries and other parts of Australia have taken, or are working towards, actions that help prevent, detect and manage chronic disease.

We are using their experiences to ensure we adopt the best outcomes for Tasmanians.

Hospitals can provide healthy food for patients ... and programs for their staff to model healthy lifestyles. NATASHA STREET, LAUNCESTON

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Connecting Care marks the beginning of the most important work – taking action to reduce the impact of chronic disease on Tasmanians.

The Chronic Disease Clinical Network will take the lead in making things happen. Its members will include GPs and practice nurses, physiotherapists and other allied health professionals working in the community and in private practice, as well as hospital specialists and their staff.

Importantly, members will also include consumers, community sector organisations with an interest in chronic disease and local government representatives.

People affected by chronic disease – including family members of those with an illness – will be placed at the centre of all we do and we will pay particular attention to reaching vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

We will do more to support staff and people who care for friends and family living with a chronic condition. We will also provide information that helps people understand their condition, stay out of hospital and keep active.

CONTACT DETAILS

For more information please contact
System Development within the DHHS.

T 6233 5202

E chronicdisease.strategy@dhhs.tas.gov.au



Bev is all for the introduction of electronic records. *“People shouldn’t have to keep repeating the same information to everyone over and over.”*

BEV PINKETT, HOBART

ACTION ON CHRONIC DISEASE IN TASMANIA

1. Healthy lifestyles and environments for all individuals and communities

The settings and circumstances in which we are born, grow, live, work and age impact on our health and wellbeing. We need to find ways to support people to make healthy lifestyle choices and to live healthier lives.

2. Early detection and intervention programs, including lifestyle and risk factor modification

It is necessary to raise awareness and support people to improve their lifestyles. We must train staff and collaborate with pharmacists, GPs and community sector organisations to encourage them to talk with people about their health and lifestyle.

3. Appropriate management and clinical care for people with chronic disease

We must provide the best care at the best time and in the best setting. We must involve the person living with chronic disease in decision-making about their goals and the services they will receive.

4. People with or at risk of chronic disease supported to actively self manage their health

Self-management places the person at the centre of their care planning and supports them in taking greater control of their health and wellbeing.

5. Integration and coordination of prevention and care.

Services should be targeted so clients receive the right care at the right time and in the right setting. This type of service delivery requires a partnership approach and greater communication and collaboration across all service providers and sectors.

6. Skilled and supported workforce

Improving prevention and management of chronic disease will require significant changes to a range of existing practices and activities. This will only succeed by training the workforce to deal with these challenges.

7. Effective surveillance, monitoring, evaluation and research

More research and evaluation will provide evidence-informed information about whether service delivery directions are having a positive impact or whether alternative paths are required.

CONNECTING CARE

Chronic Disease Action Framework for Tasmania

2009–2013

