

Minister for Ageing to open *Healthways* Australia operations.

The Minister for Ageing, the Hon. Justine Elliot MP, will officially open the first Australian *Healthways* Care Enhancement Centre in North Ryde today.

Healthways is a global population health company providing personalised wellness, prevention and disease management programs tailored for the local healthcare system.

Healthways' programs are designed to help keep healthy individuals healthy, mitigate lifestyle risk factors, and promote the best possible health for those who are already affected by a chronic condition.

Healthways Australia Managing Director, Tim Morphy, said, 'This is a first for Australia. The ability to assist an individual with their health needs, whether they are fit and healthy, or suffering from a chronic disease and help them to manage their situation is a valuable addition to the Australian healthcare system.'

'With an ageing population and the massive surge in chronic diseases coming through the system, afflicting up to 20% of the population, the recent Government reports on Health Reform, Health Prevention and Primary Care have highlighted the need for new models of care and in particular the role of health prevention'.

'We all know the statistics' Mr. Morphy said, 'Chronic diseases make up nearly 80% of the burden of disease and injury in Australia, and nearly 70% of all health spending. It's the leading cause of death and disability worldwide and this will only continue to increase.'

'We all know the challenge. Chronic diseases need not always be treated in hospitals as the first line of care; and yet we find patients landing in our emergency departments; putting our hard working health professionals under even greater stress, and preventing access for others for acute care.'
' Mr. Morphy said.

'They're stabilized, discharged and then the merry-go-round starts again.'

Healthways' health and wellbeing program begins with a personalised health risk assessment, based on which participants design a healthy living plan incorporating diet, exercise and other aspects of lifestyle. These programs also give access to health coaches, exercise physiologists and dieticians.

While those suffering from chronic disease including diabetes, asthma, lung disease, coronary heart disease and chronic kidney disease, receive expert guidance from registered nurses and other health professionals.

'In the brief time we've been operating here in Australia, we are close to having 7,000 individuals signed onto our Disease Management programs', Mr. Morphy said, 'and on track for 25,000 by mid next year.'

'This would make it by far the largest Disease Management program in Australia'.

Mr Morphy said 'In managing chronic disease, identifying and reducing risk factors and supporting health and wellbeing, rather than offering individual disease programs, *Healthways* can offer a total solution across the health continuum.'



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'Individuals enrolled in our disease management program will each have a personalised health action plan. These health action plans are driven by unique patient requirements and follow the patient throughout the course of their participation in the program.'

Mr. Morphy emphasised 'This is not a substitute for medical care. *Healthways* believes that the fundamental relationship within healthcare is between the patient and their GP.'

'Our service extends the reach of this care and we will collaborate to actively engage local doctor involvement in the program.'

'Rather, it supports healthy lifestyles and behaviour with education, monitoring and guidance between hospital and GP visits, in a way that prevents illness or complications from illness.'

At this stage *Healthways* is providing Wellness and Disease Management programs for HCF's 1.1million members.
HCF is Australia's 3rd largest Private Health Insurer.

'HCF's commitment to Wellness, Prevention and Disease Management has fundamentally changed Australia's healthcare landscape', Mr. Morphy said. 'Everyone's been talking about the need for this for years; and now it's finally happening'.

'Working with HCF has been a terrific partnership from the beginning. As well, there are tremendous opportunities to work with the Federal and State Governments, other insurers and employers, to help create a healthier nation', Mr. Morphy said.

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Media enquiries contact:

Craig Bosworth

Mob: 0409 356 455

Craig.Bosworth@Healthways.com

www.healthwaysaustralia.com.au