

+UNDOCTORED |

Southern Health Care Home general practices unveiled

0

| Media release from Southern DHB

Wednesday 25 July 2018, 12:59 PM



Better primary health care services are on the way for Otago and Southland with the launch of the first Health Care Home (HCH) general practices in the district.

Today, Southern DHB and WellSouth Primary Health Network announced the first 16 general practices to become Southern Health Care Home practices.

Amity Health Centre in Dunedin, Queenstown Medical Centre, Gore Health Centre, and Gore Medical Centre are the initial cohort in the district starting the Health Care Home process.

The Health Care Home model promotes access to urgent and unplanned care, provides more preventative care and better support of people with complex needs. The programme is also a framework for continuous improvement and business efficiency.

The second group migrating to the new model later this year includes Meridian Medical Centre, Mataora and Broadway Medical Centre in Dunedin, Waihopai Health Services in Invercargill, as well as Cromwell's Junction Health, Wanaka Medical Centre and Aspiring Medical Centre in Wanaka.

A further five practices will begin the programme in mid-2019. They include Mornington Health Centre, the Alexandra Medical Centre practices (comprising the current Centennial, Cornerstone, and Central medical practices), North End Health Centre and their satellite branch Junction Doctors in Oamaru, Clutha Health First in Balclutha and Invercargill Medical Centre.

In total, the new HCH general practices provide primary health care services to around 120,000 people – close to 40 percent of patients enrolled with a GP in the Southern district. Elsewhere in New Zealand, there are already nearly 130 HCH general practices providing care for close to one million patients.

“Health Care Home is a modernised general practice. The HCH model makes health care services more accessible for patients and it’s a better way of working for professionals in primary care,” says Dr Hywel Lloyd, Medical Director, Strategy, Primary and Community, Southern DHB. “We received more applications for the programme than we’d expected which shows GPs and practice nurses and managers in the Southern district see the value of this initiative and want their patients to benefit.”

Amity Health Centre’s Dr Susie Lawless says the HCH programme enhances work already under way at the practice.

Patients continue to see their own GP, but have options and alternatives for care as well: “We already have over 75 percent of our eligible patients using a patient portal to make appointments, email their doctor or nurse, keep an eye on their own results and to request repeats of regular medication. We expect the HCH programme to help us improve the services we provide to our enrolled patients. ”

Gore Medical Centre’s General Manager Alison Wilden says that the HCH approach will help support quality patient care and ensure good business continuity and longevity.

“HCH helps ensure better access to urgent care, coordinated care for those with chronic conditions and good health promotion services,” she says.

For patients of HCH practices, the change will mean they have more access to same-day appointments and other ways to consult with their doctors, including receiving medical advice by phone and, in some instances, using telehealth services. These changes will be phased in over the course of the HCH programme, with the first priority being improved patient access for urgent and unplanned care.

There's also potential for more treatments to move from hospital-based care to general practice as ability and capacity increases, similar to how the administration of IV antibiotics for cellulitis is already being provided at some GP clinics.

Southern DHB and WellSouth expect to have another call for HCH enrolment next year and ultimately aim for the majority of GP practices in the district to enrol in the HCH programme.

All practices in the district are eligible to apply to become a Health Care Home. The full process of implementing changes and becoming a Health Care Home can take up to three years, depending on how ready a practice is to implement change.

The Health Care Home programme is a cornerstone of the Primary and Community Care Strategy, unveiled in January by Southern DHB and WellSouth PHO, the goal of which is improving access and better coordinated healthcare services across the district.

“Patients are at the centre of our proposed improvements to health services and Health Care Home is a significant first step in delivering change,” says Ian Macara, Chief Executive, WellSouth. “Both patients and practitioners will experience the benefits.”

Health Care Home (HCH)

General Practices organised to deliver better services for patients

More options for appointments, including phone consults and targeting of face-to-face consultations to those who need them most

Stronger connections to community, hospital and specialist services

Better access to clinical information and health records through secure patient portals

Might also include additional services such as rehabilitation, rapid response services, access to clinical pharmacist services and some outpatient clinics.

Find out more about Health Care Homes and their benefits:

Visit <http://www.healthcarehome.org.nz/>
View the Primary and Community Strategy and Action Plan:

