

13 December 2009

**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**CDM-Net awarded \$4m to assist chronic disease management in rural, remote and regional areas of Australia**

Professor Michael Georgeff, CEO of Precedence Health Care, advises that CDM-Net (Chronic Disease Management Network) has been awarded \$4m funding by the federal government to advance health care under the Digital Regions Initiative (DRI). There is an outline of DRI at the end of this advisory.

CDM-Net is a world-leading example of e-health services that will be enabled by the federal government's investment into the National Broadband Network (NBN).

The DRI funding:

- is another significant step in the further application of CDM-Net to improve the delivery of chronic disease management in rural, remote and regional areas of Australia.
- will expand collaborative care services by linking with other major national and state initiatives in these regions and establishing a network of high priority e-health solutions, including telehealth, e-referral and e-prescribing

**According to Professor Georgeff:**

*"CDM-Net is the first 'cloud' service [that is, a service provided over broadband and the Internet] to assist in the prevention and management of chronic disease. It is desperately needed as 7m Australians are affected by chronic disease and it costs the country more than \$60 billion a year.*

*For the first time, collaboration is enabled across a patient's entire care team, and with the patient themselves. That care and collaboration is accessible anytime and anywhere. Together with the fast and secure connectivity that will be provided across Australia by the National Broadband Network, CDM-Net (and other cloud services) will transform health care as we know it. In trials in Western Australia and Victoria, CDM-Net has already increased collaboration among care providers by more than 100%, has improved best practice care by more than 5-fold, and increased the productivity of GPs by more than 150%.*

*CDM-Net will incorporate video, telehealth, and remote monitoring so that patients and the care team will be able to videoconference and share images and other information with each other when it is most needed. Patients' health status can be tracked continuously through remote monitors, alerting them to emergent problems before they become life threatening. Patients and the care team are reminded of appointments and medications to keep the care plan on track. This investment by the Commonwealth, Barwon Health, Precedence Health Care and the other project partners will open up new business opportunities for Australia, putting it in a position to take a world leading position in what some leading economists estimate will become a \$90Billion world market in collaborative care services and products. "*

**In summary, CDM-Net will offer the following benefits:**

- Better health outcomes, increased self management support, reduced community carer burden and, importantly, improved quality of life and improved access to health.
- Increased application of best practice health care for chronically ill people – from less than 5% currently to more than 25% by project's end.
- Fewer hospital admissions of chronically ill people
- Better care at lower cost

**Targeted regions for this project are covered by the following Divisions of General Practice:**

- GP Association of Geelong
- Ballarat and District GP Division
- Goulburn Valley Division of General Practice
- West Vic Division of General Practice
- Murray Plains Division of General Practice
- Goldfields Esperance GP Network
- MidWest GP Network
- Central Qld Rural Division of General Practice
- Rhealth (Queensland)
- GP Links Wide Bay
- General Practice South (Tasmania)

**Major partners in this project are:**

- Barwon Health
- Queensland Health
- Department of Health (Victoria)
- Department of Health and Human Services (Tasmania)
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Fred Health
- Cisco Systems
- Diabetes Australia Victoria
- GP Vic
- Monash University
- Deakin University

**There are more than 400,000 chronically ill patients in the targeted regions (and more than 7-million nationally)**

Chronic disease is a major threat to health services worldwide as evidenced by:

- Chronic diseases, including cancers, are estimated to be responsible for more than 80% of the burden of disease and injury
- More than 30% of the population has a major chronic disease, but fewer than 5% of these people receive best-practice care
- The burden of chronic disease management is increasing worldwide at 17% per annum.

Professor Georgeff is delighted at CDM-Net's success in being awarded the federal grant.

**He can be contacted for interview on 0411 193 247.**

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

### **Background on Digital Regions Initiative**

The four year \$60 million Digital Regions Initiative comprises \$46 million announced as part of the Australian Government's initial response to the Regional Telecommunications Review and additional funding of \$14 million as part of the Government's Rural and Regional Broadband Network Initiative announced in the May 2009 Budget.

The Digital Regions Initiative will co-fund digital enablement applications to improve services in the key sectors of health, education and/or emergency services in regional, rural and remote1 communities across Australia in partnership with state, territory and local governments.

For Australians living in regional, rural and remote locations, improving service delivery through the use of innovative digital enablement technology will:

- leverage the potential of the the National Broadband Network
- further stimulate Australia's digital economy
- create employment opportunities in local communities
- develop skills and help to retain professionals in local communities.

The Digital Regions Initiative will support projects that:

- boost innovation in healthcare by enabling services such as remote consultation, diagnosis and treatment in areas where there are specialist skills shortages
- extend digital education services to enable more regional, rural and remote communities to access improved educational opportunities
- increase the use of digital technologies to improve emergency and disaster response both within and across state and territory borders.