

MEDIA RELEASE

Gippsland PHN work recognised in national report

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Gippsland Primary Health Network's work in remote patient monitoring has been recognised in the Australian Government Productivity Commission's latest report - Leveraging digital technology in healthcare.

The report says digital innovations that enable care to be delivered remotely such as telehealth, digital therapeutics and remote patient monitoring accelerated during COVID and are now transforming healthcare.

Gippsland PHN has been supporting services to deliver remote patient monitoring since 2020, an initiative acknowledged by the Commission.

Using a mobile based application called Lifeguard, Gippsland PHN has supported GPs to monitor patients on a regular basis and in turn, the patient has the comfort and security of knowing they are being supported from their own home. The program helps reduce unplanned hospital admissions while improving the quality of life of patients enrolled in the program.

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Amanda Proposch welcomed the Commission's report and recognition of the organisation's ongoing work in digital health that supports greater access to care, including remote patient monitoring.

"The report confirms digital health models can be highly cost effective, can improve health outcomes and that targeted funding arrangement can ensure high-value patient care," Ms Proposch said. "When used proactively, the use of Patient Reported Outcomes and monitoring can enable identification of early deterioration and reduce hospitalisations."

Gippsland PHN was early to recognise remote patient monitoring, providing start-up funding to general practices to introduce Lifeguard. The program was initially effective in monitoring patients with COVID-19 and has since moved to supporting patients with chronic disease.

Ms Proposch said remote patient monitoring was just one piece of the broader digital technology story which was transforming healthcare.

“It is particularly important in regional and rural communities where access to health services is difficult because of a number of reasons. We recognise the opportunities digital technology offers our community and work closely with health professionals and consumers to help overcome any barriers.”

The report says that better integrating digital technology into everyday practice could save more than \$5 billion a year and ease pressures on our healthcare system. It also identifies ways in which governments can help realise the substantial gains on offer.

“We are yet to fully realise the benefits that remote care technologies offer,” the paper says.

The report says that while the uptake of remote patient monitoring is slow, it is growing.

In Gippsland, there are currently 12 general practices and 51 healthcare providers using the Lifeguard platform with the most common conditions being monitored including Hypertension, Type 2 Diabetes, Depression and Asthma.

Ms Proposch is “excited” about the potential of digital technology and the benefits for health professionals and consumers.

“We know the challenges on the health system in terms of workforce challenges, an ageing population and chronic disease. We must embrace the opportunities in the way we work to meet those challenges.

“Gippsland PHN will continue to work with health professionals and our community on initiatives to achieve our vision of a measurably healthier Gippsland.”

You can read the Productivity Commission’s report [here](#).

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