

No more long trips to specialist

by Kietley Isrin

THE constant travelling to and from specialist appointments has become all too much for 85-year-old Shirley Mosses.

Mrs Mosses, who suffers from a range of medical conditions including Alzheimers and osteoporosis, is one of many Hawkesbury residents who find it difficult to get to specialist consultations in city areas because of distance.

But now Mrs Mosses and others like her, don't have to worry.

Hawkesbury residents can now communicate with relevant health professionals through video conferencing.

A patient in the Hawkesbury can remain in the community and have their health and well-being monitored with the click of a mouse thanks to a new government funded TeleHealth service.

Last week, Richmond GP Dr Ravi Sahasrabudd he's introduced Telehealth to aged care facilities in the Hawkesbury at a special morning tea at Macquarie Towns Specialist Centre.

Dr Ravi said the new system will have significant benefits and will make life much easier for not only the patients, but their families.

"A lot of people are unaware that there is a service like this out there," Dr Ravi said.

"Through increased support, this service will improve the quality of life for the elderly and young people and



Shirley Mosses, Jennifer Moses, Louise Markus, Dr Ravi, Christine Paine, Dr Nada Rajah Ramesh, Graham Biddle and Dr Suren Jayaweera.

assist health professionals to provide more efficient, high-quality care for individuals wherever they live."

So how exactly does it work?

Your GP can refer you to a specialist for a video consultation. The specialist and the patient will be able to see and hear each other via video conferencing technology.

A GP, or another health professional with a Medicare provider number, can also be with the patient during the Tele-Health consultation to provide clinical support. This is called a 'supported' consultation.

Currently there are more than 600 videoconferencing locations across NSW which are used for a range of services in the areas of mental health; critical and emergency care; oncology; radiology;

diabetic foot care; genetic services and, chronic disease management.

But if they can't touch you how can they properly monitor you?

Dr Ravi said patients can be hooked up to devices such as blood pressure monitors, that transmit data from the patient in their home to a centralised monitoring system.

"If the specialist at the other end has any concerns, they will request to see the patient in person," Dr Ravi said.

New to the Hawkesbury area, rheumatologist Dr Suren Jayaweera said Telehealth made a big difference.

"I have video conferenced patients as far away as Dubbo because they haven't been able to travel to Sydney because it's just too far," Dr Suren said.



Peter Chidgey, Kimberley Talbot, Vivienne Leggett, Bart Bassett, Kim Ford, Tiffany Tree and Mike Creed with the cheque.

Cancer unit closer

by Joel McMurtrie

A CHEQUE for \$100,000 for the Len and Margaret Peel Chemotherapy and Infusion Unit was recently handed over by State Member for Londonderry, Bart Bassett, as part of the Community Building Partnership.

The welcome addition to fundraising for the unit came after the unit was approved to be relocated to the old Hawkesbury Hospital building. The trustees of the Hawkesbury Living Cancer Trust have been working on developing a sustainable business model for the site, fielding tenders and expressions of interest for additional medical services.

Group CEO of Richmond Club and Hawkesbury Living, Kimberley Talbot, said that initial discussions had been very positive.

"The multi-function facility will complement the existing services of Hawkesbury Hospital," she said. "The co-location and quality of services is a key issue that has been raised," Ms Talbot said.

"We are following a strict tender process through a quantity surveyor. All applications will be confidential and reviewed in line with industry best practice."

The site will incorporate a number of services from the original plan proposed for March Street, Richmond, which includes six chemotherapy and infusion beds, pathology and pharmacy services, the relocation of specialist services and underground parking for patients.

"Cancer sufferers in the Hawkesbury have

felt the tyranny of distance, which causes great personal stress," Ms Talbot said. "The Board and management at Richmond Club experienced this recently with the illness of someone very close which reinforced just how proud the group and trustees will be of the final product when it is completed."

The DA for the site is to be lodged through Council in coming weeks and minor interior renovations to the building are set to begin shortly after.

In the meantime, the trust is looking for tenders for both the oncology and pathology services. The site will allow for specialist doctors to be based on the site as was originally planned but also allows for additional space to be sublet.

As part of the plan, the Richmond Club board of directors, who initiated the trust, have decided to publish the audited accounts and list of benefactors. "This means that the community will be fully aware of where donations and funding are being directed by the trust," Ms Talbot said.

"Philanthropy from the community should be recognised as every donation, regardless of how small or large it may be, is equally important. From the \$3000 donation recently offered by Wisemans Ferry Bowling Club to the \$1 million offered by the Peel family, these generous displays of community spirit should never be forgotten."

The facility is expected to be completed by February next year.

Take heat seriously this summer

by Kietley Isrin

IF YOU can't stand the heat, then.....stay indoors.

Hawkesbury residents should be prepared for hot weather and the health effects that can come with it according to NSW Ministry of Health who officially launched the Beat the Heat campaign last week.

Beat the Heat gives people information about how you can stay healthy in the heat and avoid ending up in hospital.

"Heat puts a lot of strain on the body and can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke," chief health officer, Dr Kerry Chant said.

"It can also make underlying health conditions worse. However being prepared and taking some simple precautions can reduce the risk of heat-related illness."

In February 2011, more than 500 people visited emergency departments across the state with heat-related illness and 96 people died.

Conjoint Professor of General Practice at the University of Western Sydney and Medicare

Local Chair Dr Di O'Halloran, said certain people were at higher risk than others of suffering from heat-related illness, including those who are over 75, overweight, pregnant, breastfeeding, work outside, exercise in the heat, or have a medical illness.

"It is especially important for people with chronic diseases to prepare for hot weather and ask your GP how heat might affect your health," Dr O'Halloran said.

During hot weather, remember to:

- Drink plenty of water

- Regularly check on elderly friends, neighbours and relatives, especially if they live alone

- Plan your day around the heat - avoid being outdoors between 11am and 5pm

- Minimise physical activity

- Avoid alcoholic, hot or sugary drinks

- Wear light coloured, loose fitting clothes made from natural fibres like cotton

- Take cool showers or baths.

■ Go to www.health.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/beattheheat.

Donate your old reading glasses

IF YOU have a pair of glasses you're not using, put them to good use by donating them to the Lions Club Australia Recycle for Sight Program.

JW Chandler Funerals are hoping to collect 75 pairs of glasses for this charitable initiative by the end of this month to underline the message that 75 per cent of blindness and vision loss is either treatable or preventable. But they need your help.

Donations of prescription glasses with either plastic and metal frames can be

dropped off to collection boxes located at both Richmond and Windsor-based offices at any time during normal business hours.

"Poor vision can have a huge impact on an individual's quality of life and wellbeing. Corrected vision can help children perform better in school and avoid developmental delays and learning disabilities. For adults, it could mean the difference between successfully supporting their family, instead of being unable to meet their basic

needs," said Genean Beetson, Location Manager, JW Chandler Funerals.

"If you have an old pair or two of prescription glasses that you're no longer using tucked away in a cupboard or a drawer, please think about making the effort to drop them into a collection box at JW Chandler Funerals during October."

JW Chandler Funerals is located at 348 Windsor Street, Richmond or 4 Suffolk Street, Windsor.

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ABUNDANT LIVING

Abundant living requires optimism

A pessimist says, "If I don't try, I can't fail." The optimist says, "If I don't try, I can't win." It is the difference in the attitudes which makes for success for one and failure for the other. Optimism is one of the necessary qualities of success.

A Christian should be exceedingly optimistic. Paul tells us this and tells us why:

1. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"

Philippians 4:13. — through Christ.

2. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" **Romans 8:31. — God is for us.**

3. "I will fear no evil; for You are with me." **Psalms 23:4. — God is with us.**

4. "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me." **John 14:1. — faith in God.**

Optimism gives one a sparkle and a magnetic attraction that pulls the world to him. The world is not going to follow the man who has a gloomy outlook. We like the person who enjoys the doughnut rather than gripes at the hole in it. Wouldn't it be good if everybody was optimistic and looked toward the positive aspects of living?

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