Our community taking our Health In Our Hands

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Health In Our Hands Information and Resource Centre Inc

Health In Our Hands is a community-owned health and information centre, managed, driven and manned entirely by volunteers. It provides the community with options for making lifestyle changes and self-management of chronic disease. It has been operating within the community for ten years.

Chronic disease self-management and in particular the Stanford model is the driving force of all the centre’s activities. The centre holds a multi-licence for the Stanford model and has two T Trainers who have trained several hundred, including health professionals, leaders for these programs. Some peer leaders are also participating as facilitators for the online CCSMP program currently being offered in the USA. Using its peer leaders the centre is able to run programs such as the basic Stanford Chronic Disease Program, Stanford Pain Self Management Program and the Stanford Diabetes Self Management Program with other short health-related sessions also available. The centre works closely with local health services and the local campus of the University of South Australia by providing services, support and assistance in many projects.

Over the past ten years the centre has identified many opportunities to provide community members with the opportunity to take part in activities highlighted within the self-management programs; these include Tai Chi, simple exercises, relaxation, walking groups and other social but health-related activities. These programs are conducted by the volunteers who have undertaken many hours of training in order that programs are delivered correctly and safely.

Health promotion is a key role played by the centre; it has for nine years written and continues to write a fortnightly article for the local newspaper providing health-related information based on healthy living and lifestyle changes and promoting its services. Utilising the internet the centre runs its own website and has a presence in other social media outlets.

Volunteers work at the centre, which opens five days per week, in a room provided by the local hospital, and most of the services are conducted there but some services are now being run at other community locations to minimise client travel. Of the average sixteen volunteers, four have received ten-year service awards, with all but four having five-year awards.

Our presentation will demonstrate how a small group of determined community volunteers with very limited funding can, by working in partnership with other providers, contribute to major health outcomes both locally and nationally and indeed globally.