



Joint Heart Failure Program: Best practice for Australian chronic heart failure (CHF) management programs

Invitation to contribute

Project goal

To provide guidance about the composition of CHF management programs delivered in Australia.

Project outcome

This project will produce a practical guide to support health professionals and policy makers to establish and maintain best practice CHF management programs (linked with health services) in Australia.

Background

The Joint Heart Failure Program (JHFP) was established in 2004 to address gaps in the diagnosis and management of CHF and to improve outcomes for people with CHF. The JHFP is a collaboration between the National Heart Foundation of Australia (NHF), National Institute of Clinical Studies/National Health and Medical Research Council (NICS/NHMRC) and National Prescribing Service (NPS).

This project is part of a broader implementation plan by the JHFP to improve the evidenced-based management of CHF.

Why do we need guidance for CHF management programs?

There is good evidence that people with CHF who attend a specialised management program have better health outcomes. This is now a key management recommendation for people with CHF.¹

Currently there are over 60 CHF management programs across Australia. However, there are no standards or clear guidance on exactly what should be included in these programs. Initial audits of these programs indicate there is great heterogeneity across Australia.² Patients who have been hospitalised with CHF are at high risk of subsequent morbidity and mortality. These patients are the target group for this project.

What will the guidance be?

The guidance will:

1. be evidence driven: support Heart Foundation CHF guidelines and use key Australian studies and other relevant literature to form the basis of the components of a program
2. be a consensus statement: stakeholder input is critical to validate and prioritise program components and is a key purpose of the project
3. be relevant to the practice, policy and regulatory context in Australia to support program sustainability
4. include quality and performance measures to assist individual programs set objectives, and provide the potential to pool common indicators from several programs.

¹ National Heart Foundation of Australia and the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand (Chronic Heart Failure Guidelines Expert Writing Panel). Guidelines for the prevention, detection and management of chronic heart failure in Australia, 2006.

² Driscoll A, Worrall-Carter L, McLennan S, Dawson A, O'Reilly J, Stewart S. (2006) Heterogeneity of heart failure management programs in Australia, *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*, 5: 75-82.

Who is involved?

The executive support for the project is provided by the Heart Foundation, under the auspice of the JHFP. Expert advisory support is provided through:

- an Executive Advisory Group³
- a project working group to coordinate project activities including consultation⁴
- a range of key stakeholders who will be consulted as required, as part of the consultation phase.

How will the project be implemented?

Phase 1: Broad consultation and engagement – January to March 2009

Input will be sought from high level government representatives to determine the appropriate scope of the resource.

Phase 2: National survey for validation – May 2009

A national survey of providers and experts working in the field will be conducted to identify and validate essential program components.

Phase 3: Development of CHF program resource – August to December 2009

A draft resource, drawing on Phases 1 and 2, will be piloted with key stakeholders including clinicians, health professionals, managers and policy makers. The final resource will be available in December 2009.

Phase 4: Communication and dissemination – 2009/2010

A communication, dissemination and evaluation strategy will be developed to raise awareness and facilitate adoption of the guide across Australia.

How can you be involved?

Register your interest to be part of a national survey to comment on the critical elements of a guide for CHF management programs across Australia.

Register by emailing your name, organisation and professional role to heartfailure@heartfoundation.org.au. Registration is open from 27 February until 20 April 2009.

Surveys will be sent to the email address used to send the register of interest.

Provide information

The project working group is seeking relevant information, such as existing guidance used for the establishment of CHF programs or clinical indicators on the effectiveness of CHF programs or components.

If you have any relevant information/resources that you would like to give, email Zoe.Aho@heartfoundation.org.au by 20 April 2009.

The Heart Foundation is committed to handling your personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act. We will not provide your personal information to any other individual or organisation except on a confidential basis to contractors who provide mailing services to the Heart Foundation. In these cases, we ensure that our contractors are also bound by the National Privacy Principles to keep your personal information confidential. We may use your information to send you updates and information on our health/professional publications or health programs.

Please forward this project information and registration email to anyone who may have an interest in this project.

For further information on this project, please email Zoe.Aho@heartfoundation.org.au.

³The Executive Advisory Group comprises: Patricia Davidson, Curtin University of Technology; John Atherton, Royal Brisbane Hospital; Henry Krum, Monash University; Andrew Sindone, Concord Hospital; Simon Stewart, Baker IDI Heart & Diabetes Institute; Sonja Hood, National Institute of Clinical Studies; Nancy Huang, Heart Foundation; Zoe Aho, Heart Foundation; and Andrew Boyden, Heart Foundation.

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