

DRAFT RELEASE

November 17, 2005

CMDHB launches Community Based Rehab for Stroke Patients

The transition from hospital to home can be a difficult one for older patients who have had a stroke; but the support given by New Zealand's first Stroke Community Based Rehabilitation Team (CBRT) is making a positive difference to this journey.

As part of the Assessment, Treatment and Rehabilitation service, Middlemore Hospitals CBR team provides ongoing stroke rehabilitation in a patient's own home and local environment. Service manager Tina McCafferty says home-based services provide real benefits to patients. "Home-based therapy is about performing tasks and activities that are meaningful to the patient, in the environment where those activities are normally performed. The patient sets their own goals they want to achieve – whether that be making a cup of tea unassisted or being able to collect mail from the letterbox".

An interdisciplinary team, including a social worker, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, nurse, dietician, speech language therapist and doctor, visit the patient at home and provide individualised rehabilitation according to what is important for the patient. The CBR team visit quickly after discharge to help give the patient confidence to manage their routines.

Patients can often feel abandoned when they are discharged from hospital, having to cope with the inability to do some tasks that were once part of daily life. Rehabilitation at home can give back some of the control that has been lost. "CBR is about empowering people and encouraging them to set goals that are important and meaningful to them. Patients are much more empowered in their own homes when they have control of what they do" says Nurse Coordinator Terri Killip.

Preventing readmission into hospital, which can be costly to patients, their partners and families, is also important. The team communicates with the patient's GP to keep them informed of rehabilitation progress and any changes or problems with medication. The relationship between Primary Care and Middlemore hospital is set to grow stronger, with the CBRT accepting referrals from GP's and with more effective communication.

CBRT smoothes the transition from hospital to home, not only for patients, but family and caregivers too. "If patients or families want to ask questions or are concerned about something they can give us a call. We are a small team so it's easy for families to put a face to the voice on the phone" says Ms Killip.

In line with Counties Manukau DHB's strategic plan, CBRT is an innovative response to the Government's Health of Older People Strategy. Tina McCafferty says "in supporting this initiative with funding, the CMDHB has shown that it is forward thinking and responsive to the needs of its older population. The board has been hugely supportive". CBRT has the potential to save money by reducing the time a patient needs to stay in hospital.

The CBRT is formally launching its service at 3.30 pm on Thursday December the 1st at Ward 25 in the Assessment, Treatment and Rehabilitation building. You are welcome to come and hear more about the service, and speak to key members of the team. Please RSVP by November 25th to lauren@laurenyoung.co.nz.

For media enquiries please call Candice Bowen at Lauren Young and Associates on 09) 378 8433 or 027 276 1797.