



Media Release

Wednesday 24 February 2010

Older Persons Community Based Support Services - Those Most in Need Will Continue to Receive it

Older people who have publicly expressed fears about the loss of home support are the very people who will continue to receive the service, the Otago and Southland DHBs' Regional Chief Executive Officer, Brian Rousseau said today.

"People housebound with poor vision are the ones who will continue to receive home support," he said.

He said that the DHB was taking great care to ensure that those who really need domestic support get it and has been meeting face to face with all providers and stakeholders to explain the review changes and what they would mean for those with exceptional circumstances.

As it has been talking to home-based support providers and stakeholders, the DHB team has received considerable feedback that there are people in the community receiving domestic assistance who "do not require it" and who can undertake other demanding activities.

"We need to ensure we are spending money on the people who have been assessed as having the greatest need for services, but we must make changes for lower needs people only receiving domestic assistance," Mr Rousseau said.

"House cleaning is an area we can safely reduce while still providing a high level of care in the community so that people can remain living in their own homes rather than rest homes."

However, Mr Rousseau said it was important that the community and the DHBs worked together to ensure services reached those who really need them. "Older people do need to be supported by all of us and we need to make sure that we are very careful about explaining these changes, as we go through implementing them."

"I think it would be very easy to unnecessarily scare older people, when in fact they have no need to be concerned," he said.

Mr Rousseau said that the DHBs had been absolutely clear that there was a need for change. "There is a limit to our resources, but if we and the community work together we can make the most of what we have."

He said it was very important that providers, community groups and the DHBs continued to talk through the implementation period.

"We will continue to provide support where it is necessary to keep people safe in their own homes," he said.

ENDS

How is this process to occur

- From next week people receiving small amounts of domestic assistance only will receive a letter indicating that this service will be discontinued. A telephone number will be supplied for people who wish to have their situation reviewed.
- Those receiving higher levels of domestic assistance only will have either a telephone or face to face review prior to this service being changed.
- Each person's GP will be included in this process.

Information regarding other social agencies and services providing support for older people will be provided to all those facing having their domestic assistance changed.

ENDS

What sort of services for the Older Person does Community Based Support Services currently Provide?

Home based support services include:

- Domestic Assistance (house cleaning - mostly with some people receiving help with meal preparation and shopping)
- Personal Care (assistance with showering, dressing, and other activities of daily living)
- Carer Support
- Respite Care

Residential Care includes:

- Rest Home care
- Hospital care
- Dementia care.
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Media Queries:

Please contact Jo Harvey, Regional Communications Officer, Southland and Otago DHBs, on 027 674 1758.