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SILVER CHAIN DEVELOPS A DEMENTIA SPECIFIC HOME INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

Silver Chain, in collaboration with the Centre for Research on Ageing at Curtin University and Alzheimers Australia WA, and with thanks to funding from the Consumers and Carers Dementia Collaborative Research Centre, will be modifying and extending the current Home Independence Program into a version that is specifically designed for people with early dementia.

The Home Independence Program (HIP) is an early intervention program designed to assist older people to maximise their ability to function independently living in the community and thus require fewer, if any, ongoing home care services. HIP-D will be an extension of the HIP service model that will specifically target individuals who are experiencing early signs of dementia. In addition to the development of the service model, the funding will be used to develop the training, and associated documentation, that will enable staff to deliver the program as designed.

“Our research on HIP has in the past excluded people with a diagnosis of dementia but there have been anecdotal reports from our staff of how beneficial it has been found by people experiencing early memory loss. This, together with the building evidence regarding the success of early interventions in assisting people with dementia to maintain their independence for longer, is the basis for us developing HIP-D,” says Professor Gill Lewin, Silver Chain’s Research Director.

HIP-D will include targeted evidence-based interventions that have been demonstrated to maximise a person’s ability to function independently in their community. Having developed the service model and staff training a small pilot to test and refine the work processes and training will follow before the new service is implemented across Silver Chain metropolitan services in a staged process. This roll out will commence in October 2012.

“Implementation will be accompanied by a rigorous evaluation of the service and client outcomes over the next two years to help ensure the service is effective for clients, their families and carers. The program will be assessed in terms of its ability to assist clients to maintain their independence and stay at home longer than they would otherwise be able to.

“The service model and training are being developed by the Centre for Research on Ageing at Curtin in partnership with Silver Chain and Silver Chain will pilot and be the first to implement it. However, the program and training is being developed so that everything is documented in such a way that other agencies can also pick it up and implement it in their areas,” said Professor Lewin.

More information will be provided as the project progresses but it is understood that the project will extend HIP to specifically target individuals with dementia, with the express purpose of assisting them to remain living in the community longer. Assisting individuals to maintain their independence for longer will reduce the burden on family/carers and delay entry into residential care.

For more information about Silver Chain services, please visit www.silverchain.org.au or contact our Customer Centre on (08) 9242 0242, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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