

Brisbane team teaching hearing impaired children to speak & listen – a finalist in the national primary health care awards

Today, HESTA announced a Brisbane based organisation delivering tele practice services for children and their families affected by hearing difficulties, as a Team Excellence finalist in the 2015 HESTA Primary Health Care Awards.

The Hear and Say Telepractice Program enables families in Queensland to overcome geographic barriers to accessing services by providing remote PC-based videoconferencing sessions between therapists in Brisbane, and the parent or guardian and the child at home.

Michelle Von Muralt, Rural and Remote/Telepractice Team Leader, at Hear and Say said that the program is reaching out to families who have previously had to travel to access regular Listening and Spoken Language Specialist services.

“Often children with hearing loss experience barriers to accessing the services they need, to learn listening and speaking skills. And, with many services only available in larger cities, travel costs can prove prohibitive.

“This also impacts on the child’s education as well as family and work life, which can result in undue financial strain. The Hear and Say Telepractice Program aims to alleviate service delivery gaps for these families.”

“Our research has shown that the Program can deliver the same outcomes as face-to-face listening and spoken language therapy.

The innovative services couple videoconferencing sessions between the therapists at one of Hear and Say’s six centres, with the parent or guardian and child at home, with lesson materials and four face-to-face contact visits per year.

The team behind Hear and Say has conducted significant research to determine whether children in the Telepractice Program obtain the same outcomes as those children receiving the service in face-to-face mode, and they found no significant differences in language scores obtained between the two groups.

The HESTA Primary Health Care Awards recognise the dedication and professionalism of those working at the frontline of health care, including physiotherapists, dentists, pharmacists, therapists, GPs, rehabilitation professionals, health educators and medical practice managers.

Winners will be announced at the Awards dinner in Melbourne on Tuesday, 10 November.

The Team Excellence Award winner will receive a \$10,000 development grant. The Individual Distinction and Young Leader Award winners will each receive a \$5,000 **ME** EveryDay transaction account and \$5,000 towards further education.

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The HESTA Primary Health Care Awards is a HESTA initiative, proudly sponsored by the bank owned by industry super funds, ME.

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