

A breath of fresh air for asthma sufferers – Victorian pharmacist a finalist in national primary health care awards

Today, HESTA announced Rebecca Cause as an Individual Distinction finalist in the 2015 HESTA Primary Health Care Awards, for her work bridging the gap between pharmacy and general practice.

Ms Cause is a Victorian pharmacist who developed an innovative process for pharmacists to conduct in depth reviews for asthma sufferers and those with chronic lung conditions – known as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

Committed to improving patient care, Ms Cause recognised that pharmacists could fill a gap within aged care facilities by conducting detailed respiratory medication reviews, including observation of resident’s inhaler techniques and by providing individual advice on the best device for each resident.

“Working with an accredited pharmacist, the pilot program undertook reviews of 50 patients with asthma and/or COPD across six residential aged care facilities,” Ms Cause said.

“The process we developed not only provides detailed feedback to the GP and the facility staff about a resident’s medicines and inhaler use, but has also improved the knowledge of facility staff which they can apply in the future.”

“Many residents are not using their devices correctly, or are using devices or medicines which are not best suited to them. I saw an opportunity to decrease the number of hospital visits among aged care residents, by closely observing how they use their inhalers.”

“The findings informed the design of educational packages for GPs, pharmacists and aged care staff to assist asthma sufferers in understanding how to correctly use inhalers and medications—leading to enhanced health and quality of life for residents of aged care facilities.”

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

For more information visit hestaawards.com.au

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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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