

Corumbene Care Case Study

Tunstall

Life Changing, Life Saving

The Corumbene Care Rural Primary Health Program is tasked by the Tasmania PHN (Primary Health Tasmania) to deliver services that improve the health outcomes for people in rural and remote areas and reduce their need to go to hospital or the emergency department. The program treats the following conditions remotely at no cost to the client:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Chronic lung disease
- Musculoskeletal disorders.

In delivering these services, Corumbene works directly with clients to help them understand and manage their health, plan goals for their wellbeing, and provide access to services from home.

The delivery of these 'at home' services is enabled by Tunstall's end to end telehealth solution. The client is provided with medical equipment in their home (e.g. ECG, lung monitor, blood pressure monitor) along with an app to download onto their phone or tablet. The client takes their own readings which are sent via blue tooth to the app, and these readings are then instantly available to the nurse monitoring team via Tunstall's secure Integrated Care Platform (ICP).

Corumbene's nurses are able to view this data remotely via ICP and respond immediately to any abnormal readings. They are also able to pass this data onto the client's GP or other medical professionals who are involved in the client's coordinated care.

“ Utilisation of Tunstall's monitoring system using a single-lead ECG enabled us to provide an innovative approach for capturing heart rhythms and detecting episodes of tachycardia in between Clients' scheduled medical consultations, resulting in better understanding of trends for both Clients and their specialist.

- Erika McRae; Telehealth Lead RN



Corumbene
Care 

Dan's Story

Dan is in his late 40s and is a small business owner, subcontracting for a major Tasmanian company and responsible for a team of workers. The nature of his work is very physical and involves him using a chainsaw while suspended at height.

He had a blackout at work in 2017 and was taken to the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) Emergency Department. Over the course of the following 2 months he was taken to the RHH 4 times (twice by ambulance) with similar symptoms and was eventually placed on a 9-10 month waitlist for the cardiology clinic.

While on the waitlist Dan suffered a few associated problems including very poor coordination and loss of memory which resulted in an inability to drive and increased his anxiety. Dan was keen to find a way to manage his condition and was fortunate enough to discover Corumbene's program.

The solution

Corumbene worked with Dan to develop a comprehensive care plan that focused on improving his health literacy and remotely monitoring his vital signs including blood pressure, pulse, weight and heart rhythms. "The equipment was very easy to operate and gave me the first bit of confidence that I'd had in some time..."

Corumbene helped Dan to seek the services of a private cardiologist (via GP referral) while continuing with the remote monitoring. A report of Dan's monitoring data along with Corumbene's own observations was able to be passed onto his cardiologist and GP to assist with treatment options and drug prescriptions.

"They (Corumbene) rang and checked in on me in between medical appointments and when they received abnormal readings from the monitoring equipment. They prevented me from having to be admitted to hospital, which relieved another huge burden."

“ Without this program my recovery definitely would have taken longer, and I still would be a little nervous about the state of my health.

- Dan; Corumbene Care client

The results

Dan was in Corumbene's monitoring program for a total of 2 months, he was slowly transitioned out of the program as his health stabilised and he returned to work with no further episodes.

Since completing the program, Dan has become a vocal advocate saying that "I believe the program relieved an enormous amount of stress because I could see and understand what was happening and also see improvements. I also knew that if I had any questions or worries I only needed to call."

By using Corumbene's remote monitoring program, Dan had no further hospital admissions, ambulance trips or emergency department visits.

This resulted in a reduction of his healthcare costs by approximately 60%.

The program also saved Dan from the time that he would not have been able to work, the risk to his business and employees, his physical and mental deterioration, continued Emergency Department presentations with use of ambulance services, and having to attend the cardiology clinic.



Sue's Story

Sue was referred to the Corumbene Care Rural Primary Health Program by Palliative Care Tasmania Service; to provide a support service for her end of life journey.

She had presented at the Emergency Department 15 times (40 minute trip via ambulance) in the past 8 months with exacerbations of her Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Sue had been reviewed by specialists at the Royal Hobart Hospital and referred to Palliative Care Tasmania Service for end stage care (Level 4: terminal) with an expectation of less than 12 months to live.

In addition to COPD, Sue was extremely underweight with a Body Mass Index of only 18, and was experiencing additional social issues impacting on her health including high anxiety around her chronic condition and living conditions.

Due to Sue's age and situation, she was not eligible for community care funding via traditional aged care packages.

The solution

Corumbene accepted Sue's case and within 24 hours of assessment she had a tailored client centred care plan comprising:

- a Tunstall personal alarm system funded by Red Cross Tasmania
- Twice daily remote monitoring for blood pressure, temperature, weight and pulse oximetry, including peak flow
- a GP COPD action plan
- referrals to a program social worker, dietician, respiratory physiotherapist, and asthma association for phone support

"Not only did Sue improve her own health literacy but we have been able to work together with her other health service providers to establish effective health goals and management strategies." said Erika McRae, Telehealth Lead RN

The results

Through the remote monitoring Corumbene identified that her COPD exacerbations were linked to her anxiety and her increase in temperature linked to an infection load.

The care coordination and support provided by Corumbene increased Sue's confidence with managing her disease, exponentially decreased her anxiety and her weight increased from 36 to 42kg, and whilst on the program she did not have to call an ambulance nor present at the Emergency Department. Sue successfully implemented her GP support plan when required which also contributed to her increased confidence in managing her COPD.

This resulted in a reduction of her healthcare costs by approximately 70%.

After 4 months on the program, Palliative Care Tasmania Services reassessed Sue as Level 2: inactive - no longer requiring palliative care supports.

Sadly Sue passed away from complications not long after finishing her remote monitoring, due to a newly diagnosed condition, however she wished her remote monitoring experience to be shared for the benefit of others.

Erika McRae, Telehealth Lead RN, said "Implementing remote monitoring for Sue was a life changing experience for both client and clinician - I'm not sure who got more excited when goal after goal was achieved! Not only did Sue improve her own health literacy but we were able to work together with her other health service providers to establish effective health goals and management strategies by providing insight of Sue's vital signs history and trends."

By using Corumbene's remote monitoring program, Sue had no further hospital admissions, ambulance trips or emergency department visits.



“ This program is the best thing that has happened to me in the last two decades.

” - Sue; Corumbene Care client

The Corumbene Care Rural Primary Health Program is wholly supported by funding from Tasmania PHN (Primary Health Tasmania) through the Australian Government’s Primary Health Networks (PHN) Program.

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Tunstall Australasia Pty Ltd
ABN 44 059 121 863
1/56 Lavarack Ave, Eagle Farm QLD 4009
t: 1800 603377
e: info@tunstallhealthcare.com.au

Tunstall New Zealand
Business No. 3502431
2/65 Chapel Rd, Tauranga 3110
t: 0800 488 678
e: info@tunstall.co.nz



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