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Funding boost helps Cardihab improve lives of Australians with heart failure

Australians with heart failure are set to benefit from innovative technology designed to help them take charge of their condition and reduce their risk of hospitalisation.

Cardihab®, a Brisbane-based digital health company, in partnership with the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, has received \$740,153 in matched funding from the Australian Government's Targeted Translation Research Accelerator (TTRA), to codesign a new technology-enabled program to improve the clinical management of people living with heart failure.

Cardihab Chief Executive Officer, Helen Souris, is proud to collaborate on this important solution that aims to help improve health outcomes and quality of life for people living with heart failure.

Heart failure is a condition where the heart isn't pumping blood to the body as well as it should, meaning muscles and organs don't receive the oxygen and nutrients as they need. This causes symptoms such as tiredness, dizziness, fluid build-up and shortness of breath, which may result in hospitalisation. ¹Approximately 511,000 Australians are currently living with heart failure ² and more than 73,000 new cases are diagnosed each year ³. Cardiomyopathies – or heart muscle diseases – cause approximately half of all heart failure cases, with the remainder due to conditions where the heart is starved of oxygen due to reduced blood supply (ischaemic heart disease).

Following a first hospital admission for heart failure, 75% of people are readmitted within 12 months and 33% die during that period ⁴. This is often the result of not adhering to medication or care plans and failing to recognise symptoms that indicate deterioration. Poor health literacy, being elderly, frail, or from a culturally diverse background, all increase this likelihood.

With funding from the TTRA program and the support of partners, Cardihab will develop a digitally enabled HF management program - the SmartHF™ program - to improve the clinical management of people with heart failure in the community. It will provide tailored and individualised support for people living with heart failure and will be designed to address current barriers to effective healthcare delivery.

The project, *Getting to the Heart of It: Improving Heart Failure Outcomes with the SmartHF program*, will draw on the expertise of collaborating partners including our lead partner the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute, and Violet Vines Marshman Centre for Rural Health Research/La Trobe University, Western Health, Tasmanian Health Service and Northern Health in the codesign of Smart-HF.

Baker Institute cardiologist and cardiovascular researcher, Professor Tom Marwick, sees heart failure patients regularly in his clinics. He says this innovative program aims to help address the extremely high rates of hospital readmissions and to reduce the likelihood of complications developing which contribute to significant healthcare costs and have an enormous impact on a person's quality of life.

An expert in digital health technology, Professor Brian Oldenburg from La Trobe University and the Baker Institute says digital technology has the ability to improve healthcare significantly and to make it more accessible and flexible, and it has been pivotal in enhancing care and outcomes for patients with diabetes and other chronic diseases.

Similar to Cardihab's existing TGA-registered SmartCR™ solution for digital cardiac rehabilitation, this program will be delivered using digital technologies such as mobile apps and a secure clinician portal. This virtual delivery using digital technology has been demonstrated to address the geographical divide by providing accessible support to people in regional and rural communities, who may otherwise not have access to heart failure services. This approach also has potential cost savings via reduced costs to deliver, reduced readmissions and fewer days spent in hospital.

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About TTRA

The Targeted Translation Research Accelerator program for diabetes and cardiovascular disease, is a \$47 million Medical Research Future Fund initiative delivered by MTPConnect, that provides up to \$750,000 in Research Projects funding to nurture innovative preventative, diagnostic, therapeutic and disease management products/solutions for identified priorities associated with diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

About Cardihab

Cardihab is a digital health company that exists to help patients reach optimal health when at risk of, or living with, heart disease.

Our scientifically validated Digital Cardiac Rehabilitation (DCR) solution uses smartphone apps and web portals to give clinicians the ability to deliver more convenient, flexible and engaging cardiac rehabilitation services to patients.

Our solution has been demonstrated to increase cardiac rehabilitation uptake, adherence and completion rates, which means better outcomes for patients, clinicians and health service administrators.

About The Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute

The Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute is an independent, internationally renowned medical research facility, with a history spanning 96 years. The Institute's work extends from the

laboratory to wide-scale community studies with a focus on the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and their complications. www.baker.edu.au

1 <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/conditions/heart-failure>

2 Chen et al. Snapshot of heart failure in Australia. 2017. Melbourne, Australia: Mary MacKillop Institute for Health Research.

3 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Heart failure and cardiomyopathy hospitalisations (principal diagnosis), by age and sex, 2018-19. 2021.

4 Robertson et al. The health services burden of heart failure: an analysis using linked population health data-sets. BMC health services research 2012; 12: 1-11.