

A NEW FRONTIER: AGED CARE NAVIGATION FOR OLDER PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN IN QUEENSLAND

Authors:

LISA WOJCIECHOWSKI¹, MELISSA WARNER¹, MARK DOYLE¹

¹*Queensland Positive People*

Background/Purpose:

Nearly 50% of Australians living with HIV are aged 50 or older. Extended life expectancy for people with HIV (PLHIV) for many has led to accelerated aging, increasing health complications and care needs. Despite this, older PLHIV often hesitate to access aged care services due to past negative experiences, and fear of stigma and discrimination. Currently, no specialised aged care services for PLHIV exist in Queensland. Addressing this gap, Queensland Positive People (QPP), in collaboration with Communify and Micah, have successfully implemented an aged care 'Carefinder' program.

Approach:

The Carefinder program, a nationally funded initiative, is designed to assist individuals in connecting with existing Aged Care services while aiming to enhance integration across health, aged care, and other support systems. QPP has effectively adapted this program to address the unique needs of older PLHIV through an 'Aged Care Navigator' (ACN) role.

Outcomes/Impact:

QPP's effective tailoring of the Carefinder program has resulted in older PLHIV with complex needs being successfully connected to MyAgedCare and other relevant health, mental health and social services. These connections have improved the health and wellbeing outcomes for this cohort of older PLHIV in Queensland.

Innovation and significance:

The strategic selection of a peer for the ACN role capitalises on the inherent understanding and connection a peer brings, enhancing engagement within the target population, and ultimately meeting the needs of an under-served community. The success of the ACN program underscores the efficacy of community engagement in addressing the unique needs of older PLHIV regarding aged care. The Brisbane model's success suggests its potential adoption and extension in other Australian states, providing a promising approach to supporting the aging population living with HIV nationally and internationally.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The Aged Care Navigator position is jointly funded by Brisbane North and Brisbane South Primary Health Networks.