

The Pathways Home for Respiratory Illness was a collaborative project involving researchers from the School of Medicine, School of Nursing and Midwifery and School of Information Systems, University of Tasmania (part of Smart Internet CRC). The project was supported by the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services and funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing through the Australian Health Care Agreement and was completed in June 2008.

The project aimed to assist patients with two chronic respiratory conditions (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and cystic fibrosis) to achieve increased levels of self-management, self-efficacy and empowerment in relation to these conditions through the use of ICT supported self-monitoring techniques coupled with interactions with case mentors.

Provision of self-management skills was two fold firstly through the provision of access to mentors with specific training in assisting patients in developing and promoting self-management skills. Secondly, through the provision of a range of self-monitoring tools to assist with identification and understanding the course of their individual illness patterns and promote informed decision making.

The project provided support for self-monitoring and recording of symptoms in an electronic format, which were then able to be both viewed in a graphical longitudinal form by the patient and automatically transferred to a repository for viewing by clinicians. This system provided a means to assist patients in early identification, comprehension and action in relation to alterations in their condition with the aim of preventing costly severe exacerbations occurring. Existing, validated monitoring tools were used for evaluation. These evaluation tools focussed on monitoring a range of elements relating to respiratory physical symptoms (sputum, breathlessness, cough and spirometry) as well as the use of sense of wellbeing, level of self-efficacy, depression and anxiety scales.