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# News Release

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June 29, 2012

## **SUCCESSFUL CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM TO BE EXPANDED ONLINE**

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### **Get Better Together Online! Available Provincewide by Fall: Oswald**

The successful, provincewide Get Better Together! program that helps people with chronic illness learn to manage their conditions and live better lives will soon be available online, Health Minister Theresa Oswald announced today.

“We’ve seen good results from Get Better Together! and want to make it accessible to more people,” said Oswald. “Offering this innovative program online will bring it to a larger audience and help to ensure support is available to Manitobans when and where it’s needed.”

Get Better Together! is a standardized six-week program for anyone with an ongoing condition such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis or back pain offered in every health region across Manitoba. Volunteer peer leaders with chronic conditions present the program with trained coordinators from the Wellness Institute at Seven Oaks General Hospital.

“Manitobans will soon be able to participate online, which will help to address barriers to participating due to transportation, schedule conflicts and geography,” said Casie Nishi, executive director, Wellness Institute. “It will also allow participants to learn important self-care skills from the comfort of their home.”

“The success and impact of the Get Better Together! program has made a significant difference to the daily lives of Manitobans by helping them live more comfortably while managing their conditions,” said Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs Minister Jim Rondeau. “By providing this service online, we are committing to do our part to see the people who need assistance adjusting or improving their lives, no matter where in the province they live, are getting it.”

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Get Better Together Online! will be offered for groups of up to 25 people with ongoing health conditions. Workshops will be presented by two trained co-ordinators and help participants learn techniques from dealing with frustration, fatigue, pain and isolation to effective communication with health professionals, healthy eating and other problems related to their conditions.

Online sessions will include participation through online messaging and discussion boards. Participants will be asked to log on at their convenience two to three times each week for a total of approximately two hours. There are no requirements that participants log in at the same time.

Registration for Get Better Together Online! is now underway for sessions starting this fall. In-person sessions will continue and keep the existing network of leaders and co-ordinators in place across the province, with the addition of this new tool to meet the needs of participants who might not have been able to attend.

Pilot projects have demonstrated that online delivery tends to attract people from small communities as well as a slightly younger demographic than seen in the in-person classes.

Get Better Together! has been in operation since 2008 and more than 60 programs were delivered last year. The program is supported by the province and regional health authorities throughout Manitoba.

Manitobans with a chronic condition can find out how they can participate in Get Better Together! or Get Better Together Online! at [www.getbettertogether.ca](http://www.getbettertogether.ca).