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Mobile health lab expands educational offering through Heart Foundation partnership

People living in remote Northern Territory communities will benefit from an expanded health education offering through a partnership between Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) and the Heart Foundation.

This year, Menzies' mobile health laboratory HealthLAB will be delivering the Heart Foundation's LiveLighter program to five remote communities in the Top End and three communities in Central Australia.

Associate Professor Heidi Smith-Vaughan, HealthLAB director, said the team was excited to show people living in remote Australia ways to lower their risk of developing chronic diseases by delivering hands-on health promotion.

"LiveLighter is a fantastic public education campaign. It aligns with the aims of HealthLAB, which is promoting positive health behaviours and empowering people to reduce the risks of developing health issues later in life for themselves and future generations," Assoc Prof Smith-Vaughan said.

The LiveLighter program aims to encourage Australian adults to lead healthier lifestyles by making simple changes to what they eat and drink, and by being more active.

HealthLAB uses the latest health technology to measure participants' health and inform them about the impacts of smoking, alcohol misuse and diet, which can increase the risk of long-term diseases such as diabetes, cancer, kidney disease, obesity and heart disease.

HealthLAB stations are operated by dietitians, sonographers, clinical professionals and scientists who provide education and measure physical health through body impedance, blood pressure, carbon dioxide analyser, and upper body strength, among others.

Heart Foundation Northern Territory CEO, Simon Dixon, said the Heart Foundation was delighted to be partnering with Menzies to deliver HealthLAB to communities in the Territory.

"Healthy lifestyles lead to healthy hearts," said Mr Dixon.

"The LiveLighter program has successfully educated thousands of Australians about the importance of healthy nutrition and activity," he said.

"Now with the involvement of HealthLAB we will be able to spread this message to a really important audience in remote communities as well."

The first HealthLAB and LiveLighter program will be delivered in Maningrida on Close the Gap Day, Thursday, 15 March 2018. The team will also be setting up at the Tiwi Islands AFL Grand Final on Sunday, 18 March 2018.

For more information about HealthLAB, visit www.menzies.edu.au/HealthLAB

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HealthLAB director, Associate Professor Heidi Smith-Vaughan, is available for interview over the phone.

HealthLAB team nutritionist, Anastasia Grasso, will be available for interview at the Tiwi Islands AFL Grand Final from 8.30am to 3.00pm.

Heart Foundation NT CEO, Simon Dixon, is available for interview over the phone.

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Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies School of Health Research is one of Australia's leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving Indigenous, global and tropical health. Menzies has a history of over 30 years of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, joining with partners across the Asia-Pacific as well as Indigenous communities across northern and central Australia. Menzies collaborates to create new knowledge, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.

Heart Foundation

The Heart Foundation is dedicated to fighting the single biggest killer of Australians – heart disease. We fund life-saving cardiovascular research, community programs and advocate for heart disease prevention and care for all Australians. Our sights are set on a world where people don't suffer or die prematurely because of heart disease.