

AEP CLINIC WINS GLOBAL *health care award*

Chronic Care Australia (CCA) took out the *Primary Care Award* at the global Value Based Health Care (VBHC) Awards in Amsterdam for its integrated Exercise as Medicine treatment plan to prevent and manage mental and physical chronic conditions concurrently.

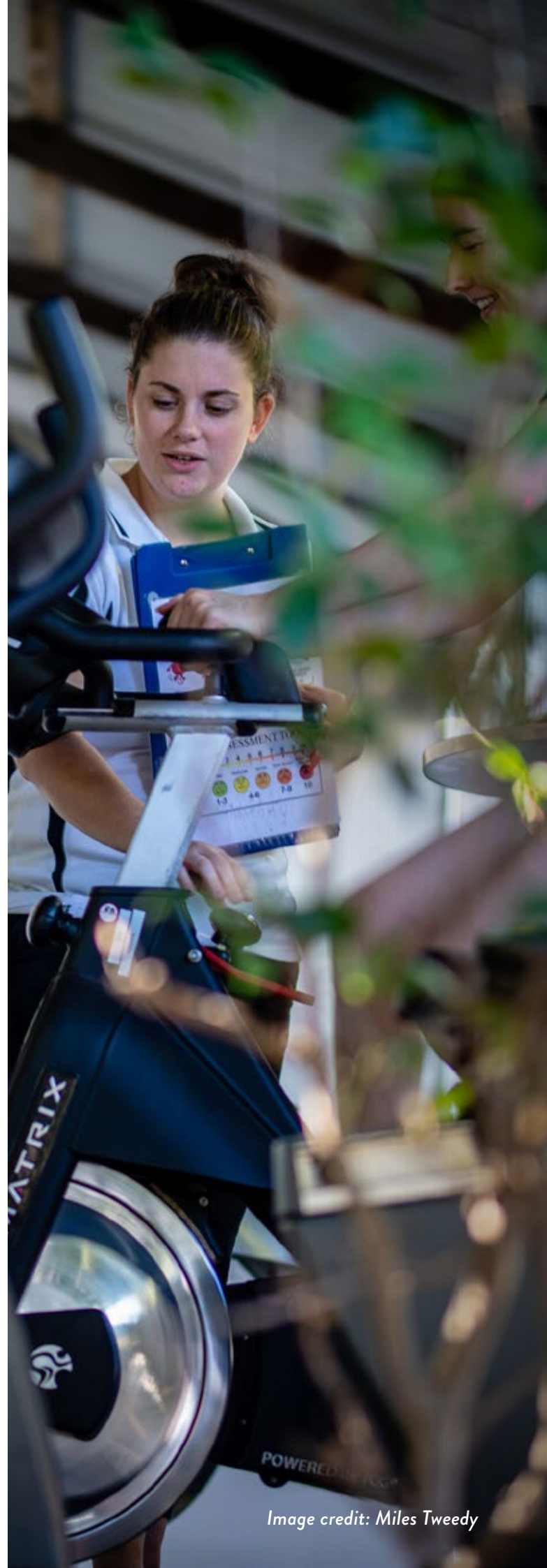
The VBHC Prize recognises and embraces initiatives that adopt a fundamentally new line of thinking in creating excellent patient value in terms of real outcomes and real costs.

Katie Stewart is the Director and Founder of CCA and shares with us the story of CCA, what makes its programs so effective, and the joy and reward of her team being celebrated on a global stage.

Share with us about Chronic Care Australia and your team.

I've watched my mother navigate a severe mental illness for 38 years. Over her lifespan, the side effects of prescriptive treatments and the illness itself have impacted on the quality of her life and her life expectancy. I believe we can do better. I believe we have a duty to do better. Right now, we have an opportunity to re-imagine the way health care is delivered so we can offer a solution to the growing pandemic of chronic conditions globally.

It used to be comorbidity that was the main focus and challenge. It is now multimorbidity that is quickly becoming the greatest threat to our health care system and communities. The recent untold impact of COVID and long COVID on the 48% of Australia's population with at least one chronic condition will be realised over the next decade. We will see increasing chronic disease related hospital presentations and increased cases of multimorbidity rates. Currently 20% of Australians are



estimated to be multimorbid. Almost half of these Australians live in the lowest two socioeconomic areas. 80% of Australians living with a mental illness have at least one severe physical condition (*Chronic Conditions and Multimorbidity, AIHW, 2020*).

Chronic disease, particularly combined mental and physical conditions, can shorten the length and quality of life of the sufferers by up to 14 years. They also have an enormous financial and social impact on the immediate and extended families, their communities, and the health care system at large (*Chronic Disease, AIHW, 2020*).

The future of effective primary health care delivery is dependent upon new systems of care that are patient-centred and deliver the highest possible collective health care value.

Chronic Care Australia provides health care solutions for all Australians suffering from mental and physical chronic conditions. At Chronic Care Australia, we are committed to reducing the fiscal and social burden of chronic disease in our metro, remote and regional communities by delivering face to face, virtual and home-based programs and services.

Over the past three years, we have developed and validated an exercise medicine delivery and prescription system that successfully treats, manages and prevents mental and physical illnesses concurrently. We triage the whole person so that all aspects of health are considered in our treatment plans.

Tell us about winning the Primary Care Award at the VBHC Awards earlier this year.

We were absolutely thrilled to be recognised on a global scale and sit alongside the esteemed international finalists for the Value Based Health Care Award. We've worked extremely hard to ensure our unique exercise medicine intervention delivers high health care value outcomes.

The clinical translation of this research into treatment programs that overcome the three greatest objections people have to engaging in exercise and physical activity (being **motivation, adherence** and **tolerance**) allows us to effectively treat existing conditions as well as reduce the risk of other secondary and tertiary conditions developing. It breaks down the barriers of the once silo service provision of segregated mental and physical health care management. Our vision is to help deliver effective doses of exercise medicine using our system of care so that all Australians can live well for longer. We are extremely grateful to Value-Based Health Care Center Europe for recognising our work. Exercise medicine is one of the most cost effective and highest health care value means of transitioning our health care system into a preventative framework while reducing ambulant hospital presentations and associated costs.

What do you think it is about CCA's service delivery that stands out?

1. It's evidence-based, authentic and organised to support our client's needs while working with GPs and specialists to realise the best possible outcomes.
2. All our services are generated by research translation.
3. Our programs consider the needs of the whole person by offering comprehensive allied health services around a foundational exercise medicine framework. Our unique triage process considers primary, secondary and tertiary conditions inclusive of mental and physical chronic conditions.

How has your clinic in Perth pivoted successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic?

In the first week of COVID last year, we transitioned close to 60% of our clients into virtual services. We have evolved our virtual clinic offering over the last 18 months and can now offer highly efficacious programs to clients across Australia and internationally. We have also been proactive in identifying unique partners that will help us deliver exercise medicine programs via this virtual Care Clinic to thousands of Australia's and international patients over the coming months and years. We look forward to engaging with the Australian exercise medicine community to help us meet the demand for our services.

With over 20 years experience as an Exercise Physiologist, any career highlights you'd like to share?

- » Teamwork with incredible young new graduates and employees.
- » Inspiring clients who trust in you and empower you to support and help them realise the best possible outcomes.
- » Being lucky enough to have the support of incredible business minds and colleagues that are prepared to be productively disruptive, have a sense of duty and urgency, and are focused on realising effective long-term changes as opposed to bureaucratic, self-serving agendas.

What's up and coming for CCA in 2022?

Scaling up our virtual clinic, working with global partners, and working with the Australian exercise medicine community to continue our relentless pursuit of helping ALL Australians live well for longer with our commercial and philanthropic project partners.