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Top End communities prepare to face COVID-19

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people living in remote communities are at greater risk from Coronavirus (COVID-19), due to the higher prevalence of chronic health conditions including cardiovascular disease such as rheumatic heart disease. These risks are compounded by overcrowded housing, limited access to healthcare and the frequency of travel between communities.

Take Heart, a community-led action group has been working in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the Top End of Australia, and has produced important health messages via video with local people and local languages to help individuals, families, and communities prepare to face COVID-19.

Dr Bo Remenyi, paediatric cardiologist and 2018 NT Australian of the Year, thanked the Take Heart team and Moonshine Agency who produced the videos, with the support of the Snow Foundation, to help educate people in remote communities to be safe if COVID-19 spreads.

“Take Heart’s focus has been on education and awareness of rheumatic heart disease – how to help detect, treat and prevent that deadly disease,” Dr Remenyi said.

“COVID-19 is another disease that poses a great risk to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in remote communities, and again awareness and education is needed.

“These videos focus on good hygiene practices and social distancing behavior that can help slow the spread of COVID-19 and help protect the communities.

“In addition to providing practical health tips, they highlight the importance of people continuing to take their medication during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those with Rheumatic Heart Disease who require monthly penicillin injections on time every month for ten years.

“Significantly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are taking the lead in communicating these messages in their own languages, in community. There are five separate videos, and each conveys the messages in the local language that’s appropriate in each community.

“The ‘national video’, is suitable for a general audience and one that I encourage everyone to spread far and wide through every channel. We want this messaging to spread to individuals and communities before COVID-19 can.”

The National video is available now: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQeiHcAKIHM>

Five community specific videos will be released over the next fortnight. Sign up the Take Heart You Tube channel or follow us on Facebook to see all the videos as they are released.

Download: <https://vimeo.com/moonshineagency/download/403236932/d9cdca6d62>

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