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Life Made Easier For Patients Thanks To Renal Fund

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Media Release

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Life Made Easier For Patients Thanks To Contact Energy Renal Fund

The Contact Energy Renal Fund continues to support Northland dialysis patients by funding applications of up to \$1000 towards items that would improve their quality of life on home dialysis.

The Contact Energy Renal Fund was set up in 2009 with an endowment of \$25,000 to help renal patients dialysing themselves at home. The Northland Foundation manages the Fund on behalf of Northland DHB.

Northland DHB has renal social workers who assist patients throughout the year to apply for whatever is needed to lessen the hardships they often face.

Northland DHB renal manager Cheryle Kiwi described the fund as a “blessing” which can be used to pay for a variety of things which help to support patients to dialyse at home.

This includes covering electrical costs associated with dialysis treatment or for recliner chairs for comfort whilst dialysing. Cheryle said there are 58 patients on home-based dialysis throughout the region, and 14 had received grants from the fund this year.

“It’s made a big difference to patients who would be significantly disadvantaged without this financial support. These items really improve the person’s quality of life as well as enhancing their safety and comfort at home.”

The fund paid for Kaeo patient Lois Samuels, age 72, to receive a Sonata lounge suite this year which features a much-needed footrest.

Patients on home based therapies need to set up dialysis equipment to clean their blood and can spend considerable amounts of time sitting whilst on dialysis.

Lois has been dialysing at home since 2016, and like hundreds of patients would otherwise have had to travel to hospital multiple times per week for haemodialysis.

Lois tries to keep herself as active as possible by gardening, visiting her marae and baking, but before receiving the lounge suite, she was having trouble getting up after sitting for long periods.

“I love it and I’m very grateful to Contact Energy,” Lois said. “I make sure when anyone visits they have a sit on it and my grandchildren are really impressed saying to me ‘oh granny you’ve got a new one’.”

Whangarei man Hank Woelders, 61, received a La-Z-Boy recliner thanks to the Contact Energy Renal Fund this year and, like Lois, needs to plug into a Homechoice PRO dialyser every night. Hank first went on dialysis following kidney failure in 2006, which is likely connected to his diabetes, which first occurred at age 12.

Hank said dialysis isn’t too draining, but he has had six heart attacks, been in and out of hospital frequently and needs regular rests on a quality chair. “It’s just right for having a bit of R&R.”

“[The fund] is a great help, it’s really appreciated. I’m sure there are a lot of happy people out there who have had the same thing happen to them.”

Miriam Peeni of Paparoa received a new Akai electric stove thanks to her hardship grant. Miriam has been on home-based dialysis for nearly five years following kidney failure. “I collapsed at work one day. I had multiple cysts in both kidneys and glomerular sclerosis of the kidneys.”

Miriam’s old stove was corroded and dangerous. The fund paid for the stove as well as the hundreds of dollars it cost an electrician to wire it safely. “I was blown away when they offered the fund to me. I didn’t expect it. I was quite shocked they were going to do the \$1000 grant.”

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