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## CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

### **AgeWell: A Unique Care Model for Older People in Ireland combining peer-based social engagement and mobile technology to improve health outcomes and well-being among older people.**

ICIC20 Virtual Conference – September 2020

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Long term population projections paint a clear picture in terms of the growth of demand for effective supports for our older people. The over-60s population is expected to grow to over 1.3M by 2031 and 1.8M by 2046 with the most rapid growth segment being the over 85's. There is a necessity to invest in innovative solutions that will address the care needs of a growing older population, that will provide a more effective support service to enable older people to remain in their own homes longer. AgeWell is one such innovation, using a pioneering and cost-effective health monitoring system that aids older people to stay living at home for as long as appropriate.

Our aim is to support older people (over 60 's with core target over 75's) to live well for longer in their own homes and communities. AgeWell does this by: Reducing isolation and loneliness, Identifying evolving health problems, Health promotion, Connecting older people to appropriate primary care providers, social services and community resources.

The model combines best practice of several care coordination models and includes the following key elements:

- We recruit and train people aged 50+ as AgeWell volunteer companions ("AgeWells")
- AgeWells provide sustained social engagement through home visits and phone calls
- AgeWells utilise a mobile-phone based health screening tool to capture health, wellbeing and related information about our clients
- The AgeWell technology processes the information using referral algorithms to generate suggested actions to explore with our client.
- The aim is to identify and address evolving health, social and environmental problems before they escalate and to link clients with appropriate services in a timely manner depending on their individual needs.

The AgeWell programme targets those at particular risk, with older people living alone at home as our core target group. The model encourages the contribution and independence of older people, offering benefits to them, their families, communities and society as a whole. Our core aim is to enable our clients to remain living in their own homes and

communities for as long as possible. In addition to outcomes for our individual clients, our aim is to introduce a system-wide cost-effective service that complements existing health and wellbeing, social and other services.

On assessment of 100 clients after an average of 9 months receiving AgeWell services, there was an 80% reduction in self-reported loneliness, a statistically significant improvement in wellbeing by 40%, emotional and informational social support improved by 21% and self-rated health improved three-fold. Overall reported frequency of physical activity improved along with perceived fitness levels. Furthermore, the longer clients receive the service the bigger the reduction in loneliness -45% reduction in 4 months and 80% reduction in 9 months.

The AgeWell programme is transferable to every county in Ireland- by 2021 there will be 101,000 over 75's living alone in their own homes with growing care needs. The Third Age AgeWell programme began in February 2018 and now has 183 clients referred into the service- 77% of which came from various HSE sources in Ireland.