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Health reform starts with us

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PLANNING of our health system starts with you.

That's the message being delivered along with census questionnaires to local residents, who are being asked to take part in a large Commonwealth-funded health study.

Port Lincoln is the only city in Australia to have been selected as a site for this type of study, designed to capture a complete picture of a population's health, including how people access and use health services in all their

forms from hospitals to mental health services.

The Linkin Health Study, funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council, is the initiative of an Adelaide University research team, in conjunction with Port Lincoln's Spencer Gulf Rural Health School.

The study will start with a confidential health census questionnaire that everyone aged 15 and over will be encouraged to fill in on October 10 - 10/10/10.

The census questionnaire will be hand delivered and collected by census collectors to every household in Port Lincoln.

Local general practitioner and head of the Spencer Gulf Rural Health School Jonathan Newbury said by completing the health census and participating in the study, Port Lincoln residents would be making an important contribution to improving the understanding of health services in the local community and the State.

"The Linkin Health Study will provide uniquely important data that will assist the government and local agencies with their future health strategies, as they grapple with the challenges of an ageing population, an increase in chronic disease and rapidly accel-

erating costs of technology and health services," he said.

"It is vital to the success of the Linkin Health Study that local health providers and the general community support and participate in the study."

People are also required to pilot test the questionnaire in two weeks' time, a process Dr Newbury said would only take about 15 minutes; anyone interested can phone 8683 0143.

Community engagement officer Julie Low has recently been employed to contact local community groups and organisations to explain the importance of the study and health census.



HEALTH STUDY: Linkin Health Study community engagement officer Julie Low and Spencer Gulf Rural Health School head Jonathan Newbury are urging locals to take part in a confidential health study aimed at improving health care.