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Smart houses key to keeping elderly at home

SMART houses equipped with movement sensors and intelligent systems are the key to keeping elderly people well and living in their own homes.

A new report, Smart technology for Healthy Longevity, says enormous health and safety benefits can be gained using existing wireless systems along with new “gerontechnologies”.

“Elderly-friendly smart homes use built-in systems for movement detection, fall prevention, home diagnostic

equipment, medication management and simple communication devices for linking to family and support networks,” it says.

“But there is confusion over standards and connectivity as different sectors approach the market from different viewpoints.

“And the development of in-home healthcare technology is limited by the inability of clinics and hospitals to exchange data and to interpret data obtained from users’ home systems.”

Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering executive director Vaughan Beck said the study showed investment in systems that kept older people healthy

and active resulted in huge savings in hospital and aged care costs.

“Under present funding models, illness and injury gets funded, rather than prevention,” Dr Beck said.

“Technology can help elderly people to remain safe and mobile — a lot of this is already available and not expensive.

“We could make a huge difference pretty quickly if funding was available.”

ATSE wants a national strategy on a technology-based support strategy for healthy ageing. It believes the federal government should be interested as it funds most hospital and aged care.

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