Unintentional weight loss in residential aged care homes - Letter 2021

Sent April 2021 - Dietitians Australia expresses concern about continued raised rates of 'unintentional weight loss' in residential aged care homes. This was sent to the Hon Greg Hunt, Minister for Health and Aged Care, and Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services, requesting a meeting to discuss.

Letter excerpt

It is alarming to see that in the October-December 2020 quarter, 14,985 aged care residents recorded significant unplanned weight loss (i.e. three or more kilograms) and 15,274 residents recorded consecutive unplanned weight loss (i.e. a loss of any amount every month over three consecutive months) compared to the previous period. The accelerated rate of almost 1,150 more residents recording significant unplanned weight loss in the last quarter compared to the previous period is unacceptable and cause for serious alarm and prompt action.

Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) are an essential part of the solution to reverse the escalating rates of untended weight loss and malnutrition in residential aged care. Yet the current aged care system means that APD services are sadly an afterthought, typically called upon by aged care providers when significant amounts of weight have been lost and malnutrition is well established. The current lack of provision of adequate food and fluids and access to APD services represents elder abuse by neglect or omission.

For more read the full letter.

Get in touch

If you have any questions about this letter, contact us at policy@dietitiansaustralia.org.au