

Nutrition linked to 4 out of 10 top complaints in aged care sector - Media release

A recent [Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's sector performance report](#) has revealed an increase in complaints against aged care operators, with 1517 received in the quarter September 2021, to 1639 complaints in the quarter December 2021.

Of the top ten complaints lodged to the Commission in the quarter, four are linked to nutrition, heightening concerns that up to 50% of residents in aged care are malnourished. The complaints include 'food and catering', 'constipation and continence management', 'falls prevention', and 'change of clinical status and deterioration'.

Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian and food in aged care expert, Julie Dundon explains why the federal government must take urgent action against the unacceptable levels of malnutrition throughout the sector.

"The complaints that get to the Commission are usually the ones that haven't been resolved by the provider, or the complainant has no confidence in the provider to deal with it," Julie explained.

"So, these numbers are concerning no matter which way you look at it."

Dietitians Australia is calling on the federal government to ensure malnutrition is finally addressed through malnutrition screening for all residential and in-home aged care. And every residential aged care home should undergo an annual on-site menu and mealtime assessment as a condition of receiving the \$10 Basic Daily Fee supplement.

Chief Executive Officer of Dietitians Australia, Robert Hunt explains why the government cannot afford to ignore this issue

“Malnutrition increases the risk of falls, pressure injuries, hospital admissions and mortality,” Robert said.

“As a result, costs increase across the aged care sector and the broader healthcare system, so addressing malnutrition will improve the quality of life for aged care consumers and provide significant healthcare savings to the nation.

“The federal government is currently only measuring unplanned weight loss, and this is not an internationally acceptable measure of malnutrition. The real risk is we are not currently picking up all malnutrition in aged care. We must have mandatory malnutrition screening and include malnutrition in the Quality Indicator Program

“There are validated, quick and easy malnutrition screening tools which can be used by aged care workers right now. And we have dietitians poised and ready to manage malnutrition. We just need government recognition and support to fix malnutrition once and for all.

ENDS

Julie Dundon and Robert Hunt are available for interview.

Media enquiries

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Note to editors: Dietitians Australia is the leading voice of nutrition in Australia, representing dietitians nationally and advocating for healthier communities. Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia.