Dietitians Australia

Australians deserve more out of Medicare

Dietitians Australia is welcoming the news that a major overhaul of Australia's Medicare system intends to better integrate allied health professionals including dietitians into primary healthcare.

"With the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce's key recommendations due to be made public within weeks, it is promising to see reports today from the Health Minister that he intends to see doctors "working hand in glove" with allied health professionals under the new model.

"We agree with Minister Butler's comments that Australia's Medicare system has reached its used by date," Dietitians Australia CEO Robert Hunt said.

"If we want to tackle the complex chronic health issues facing Australians today, including the burden of diet-related illnesses, we must make sure everyone can get more out of Medicare.

"Moving away from the GP fee-for-service model to a 'blended' system could see patients receiving primary care from other professionals, including accredited practising dietitians under Medicare.

"Bringing together experts from across the health system, including dietitians and all allied health professions, in a multidisciplinary team care model would help to deliver the kind of care Australians most need now."

"If delivered well, and accredited practising dietitians are enabled to work to their full scope of practice, this could be transformative in improving the health and wellbeing of Australians.

"Accredited practising dietitians are fundamental to the prevention, treatment and management of many complex chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, mental illness, osteoporosis, liver and lung diseases, cancer."

“Our workforce is also in a unique position to hit the ground running now. We are fortunate not to be suffering from workforce shortages seen across other professions in the health sector.

“While we are eagerly awaiting the full details of the report’s recommendations, we urge the Minister to commit to continued funding of allied health professionals within the new model.

“Australians deserve strong continuity of care, and ongoing access to allied health professionals including dietitians if we truly want to tackle the chronic disease burden in this country,” Mr Hunt said.

Media enquiries

For media enquiries and interviews, contact0409 661 920.

Note to editors: Dietitians Australia is the leading voice in nutrition and dietetics 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.