Investing in nutrition care for Australians now will be cheaper than medical treatment in the future

Dietitians Australia is calling on the Government to invest in nutrition care now to stem the burgeoning impact of diet and lifestyle-related chronic disease on the health system and the well-being of Australians.

It comes as the latest data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released today shows $82 billion was spent on chronic conditions in the year 2022-23.

“Our health spend on chronic disease can be significantly reduced with investment in prevention and early intervention strategies, including nutrition care and therapy,” Dietitians Australia President Tara Diversi said.

The report shows $16.2 billion was spent on cardiovascular disease in this period, $12.5 billion on gastrointestinal disorders and $5.3 billion on kidney and urinary disease.

“We know that chronic disease conditions like these can be improved or prevented with effective nutrition care and therapy by an accredited practising dietitian,” Ms Diversi said.

“Under the current Medicare Chronic Disease Management Program (CDM), Australians can only access a maximum of five allied health consultations per year, shared across 13 different health professions, including dietitians, physiotherapists, and podiatrists.

“Providing nutrition therapy isn’t a one-time fix.

“For people living with chronic disease, it’s an ongoing journey requiring consistent support from the multidisciplinary team, including dietitians,” President of Dietitians Australia, Tara Diversi said.

“Australians deserve better access to dietitians to support their individualised nutritional needs, to access nutrition counselling that supports and empowers lifestyle changes and to receive specific nutrition-focused treatments for chronic disease.

“Only 1.44 percent of total spend on disease and injury in this period was on allied health care, equating to 2.5 billion dollars – it is just not enough.

“We are calling on the Government to increase allied health service limits under Medicare as a priority, to include dedicated services for accredited practising dietitians.

“Effective nutrition care and therapy delivered by accredited practising dietitians keeps people out of hospital, and vastly improves their wellbeing and quality of life.

“Investing in nutrition care now will save Australians billions, preventing costly health complications, hospitalisations and overall ensuring Australians can live their best lives.”

For media enquiries and interviews, contact our Media Manager on 0409 661 920.

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