Dietitians Australia Statement on PBAC Announcement - 19 December

Dietitians Australia acknowledges today's announcement to list Wegovy on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for people living with established cardiovascular disease and obesity.

The PBAC has recommended that semaglutide be subsidised through the PBS for people who have already experienced a cardiovascular event such as a heart attack, stroke or have symptomatic peripheral arterial disease.

The recommendation determined that PBS funded access to the medicine will be limited to people with a BMI of 35 kg/m² or higher, or 32.5 kg/m² or higher for people of Asian, Aboriginal, or Torres Strait Islander ethnicity.

The PBAC also considered the need to improve access to non-pharmacological interventions, such as diet and physical activity support.

"Dietitians Australia recognises that the evidence shows people can experience significant health benefits from GLP-1 RA medicines when appropriately prescribed and supported by in person by dietitian, and that Australians deserve fair and equitable access to care," Dietitians

Australia Chief Executive Officer Magriet Raxworthy said.

“Dietitians Australia continues to call for safeguards to ensure that anyone prescribed weight-loss medicines for any purpose is also supported with access to a dietitian.
“We welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Government to ensure that the right criteria to support the effective use of these medicines are established.

“GLP1RAs suppress appetite, and without appropriate nutrition support, people will be at risk of malnutrition, loss of muscle and bone mass, and the development of disordered eating.
“Any current or future government investment in pharmacotherapy must be sound, sustainable and focused on long-term health outcomes.

“Without a dietetic guarantee in the use of the medicines, and expanded patient access to dietitians in primary care, the public health investment is wasted.

“Lasting improvements in health are achieved through comprehensive, multidisciplinary care that includes funded access to evidence-based nutrition support before, during and after treatment.

For media interviews please contact Amy Phillips on 0409 661 920.