

26 November 2020

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck
Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: senator.colbeck@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister

We are writing to gain your support with our request to include dietitians as being essential care workers in aged care facilities during the difficult time of COVID-19 and during similar situations if they arise in the future to the state and territory health ministers.

During COVID-19, the Government have advised that the following allied health services may be provided:

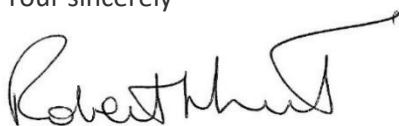
- allied health services provided by allied health professionals working as essential workers in hospitals providing critical clinical care or as directed by the hospital.
- allied health services provided by allied health professionals working in private practice providing care through telehealth and other virtual care options.
- students, medical/nursing/midwifery/allied health on placement providing essential care in hospitals or through telehealth.
- allied health professionals providing mental health services in community settings by telehealth or by face-to-face (but only in the instance of emergency clinical care for potentially life-threatening situations where telehealth is not clinically appropriate).

This is wonderful and allows people to continue to receive essential allied health services in many cases, however this does not currently include aged care homes. We are requesting that dietetic services in aged care homes be added to this above essential list, even if via telehealth.

It is essential that our aged care residents achieve food and fluid safely and that meets their individual nutritional needs. I refer you to our recent media release, '[Do not forget food: the essential ingredient in health and wellbeing of older Australians](#)' which highlights the role Accredited Practising Dietitians play not only on an individual level with residents but also through the whole food service system of the aged care facility'.

We would appreciate your support with this request at the state and territory level.

Your sincerely



Robert Hunt
Chief Executive Officer