2 December 2013

NEW NATIONAL APPROACH TO TACKLE DIABETES

The Australian Government will develop a new national strategy to tackle the nation’s diabetes epidemic.

The Minister for Health, Peter Dutton, announced plans for the new National Diabetes Strategy at the opening of the 2013 World Diabetes Congress in Melbourne today.

An expert Advisory Group, co-chaired by The Hon Judi Moylan and Professor Paul Zimmet, will be established.

This group will consider available evidence and consult with a wide range of stakeholders to inform the development of the National Diabetes Strategy.

Developing a new national strategy was a Coalition election commitment to meet the challenges of one of the nation’s most serious health issues.

The strategy will inform how existing health spending in this critical area can be better targeted to address diabetes prevention and management.

“Too many Australians have diabetes”, Mr Dutton said.

“More than four per cent of the population have a diagnosed diabetes condition and a further one per cent have diabetes and don’t know it. This is why the Government is taking steps to develop a national strategy.”

Mr Dutton acknowledged the challenges being faced across the world from the increasing incidence of chronic disease.

“We know that diabetes interacts with and influences other chronic diseases,” he said.

“Many of these diseases and associated complications can be prevented by targeting shared risk factors such as obesity.

“It is important that doctors and other health professionals are supported by a system that enables them to provide patients with best practice treatment and management of diseases like diabetes.”

As well as lifestyle-related type 2 diabetes, the Government is concerned about the high number of children living with type 1 diabetes.
In recognition of the need for further research, the Government has promised an additional $35 million to support the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation’s Clinical Research Network in its efforts to find a much needed cure for type 1 diabetes.

The Government is also providing an additional $1.4 million for the diabetes insulin pump programme. This will benefit more than 200 children and their families with subsidised access to insulin pumps over the next year.

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