

12 April 2007

COAG must act to alleviate diabetes- The unnatural disaster

Last week's release of the Intergenerational Report 2 (IG2) handed down by Treasurer Peter Costello provides all the evidence COAG needs to act immediately on preventative health care to reduce the diabetes disaster.

The IG2 Overview states that over the next 40 years:

- the population will continue to increase in size but with a higher proportion of older people
- substantial fiscal pressures will emerge due to projected increases in spending, particularly in the areas of health, age pensions and aged care
- health expenditure is projected to nearly double as a proportion of GDP

It also states "We need to continue to prepare for the health care we want in the future, and ensure that health spending is as efficient and effective as possible. For example, promotion of healthier lifestyles can prevent many health problems and reduce overall health costs over time,¹"

AGPN Chair Dr Tony Hobbs said conditions such as Type 2 diabetes are far more prevalent in older Australians as a result of the lifestyle choices they made in their younger years.

"It is estimated that over one million Australians suffer from Type 2 diabetes and the number is increasingly rapidly.

"We already know that diabetes and other chronic conditions are costing the economy greatly," Dr Hobbs said.

AGPN, in their budget submission, detailed a number of solutions that will reduce the number of Australians suffering from chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes.

To combat the diabetes disaster AGPN proposes:

- obesity be recognised as a chronic disease under Medicare to improve access to treatment
- divisional managed pre-diabetic clinics GPs would be able to refer patients
- children's health check ups when they have their 4yr old immunisations
- a practice nurse payment allowing nurses and Aboriginal health workers to conduct specific preventative health checks.

AGPN urges COAG to be decisive and implement workable strategies to ensure prevention and early intervention in attempting to defuse the diabetes disaster.

For more information please contact AGPN CEO Kate Carnell on 0415 662 266

¹ Commonwealth of Australia *Intergenerational Report Overview 2007* Canberra ACT

http://www.treasury.gov.au/igr/overview/html/overview_12.htm