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The Peak Body Representing Allied Health in Australia
Incorporating AHPARR (Rural & Remote)

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Govt health funding: Rural scholarships great, but diabetes plan lacks allied health input

Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) has commended the Federal Government for its new funding initiatives to promote allied health in rural and regional areas but is disappointed with the lack of consultation over increased funding for diabetes care.

AHPA President Carol Mioduchowski said, "The Government's health reform initiatives are yielding some positive outcomes. Funding for allied health clinical placements and to establish an allied health locum scheme in rural and regional areas is welcome. However, the new diabetes initiative was designed without consultation with the allied health professions and we don't believe it is adequate to meet the needs of people with diabetes."

Ms Mioduchowski said that the Federal Government's move to double scholarships for allied health clinical placements in rural and remote areas and to establish a locum scheme to support 1,000 allied health workers over the next decade, announced on April 6th, was a much-needed funds injection to support the increase of allied health professionals in areas of short supply.

"More support for clinical placements and the establishment of an allied health locum scheme will help to attract an allied health workforce to rural and remote areas, where it is desperately needed," she said.

However, she said, the lack of consultation with the allied health professions on the recently announced diabetes initiative (\$436 million for General Practices, announced on March 31st) showed in the inadequate allocation of funds for allied health services.

"Effective care and management of people with diabetes involves a team of health professionals including podiatrists, dietitians and psychologists and these health professionals will be the key to reducing hospital admissions," Ms Mioduchowski said. "Under the new scheme there is only \$250 per person allocated for allied health which is inadequate for diabetes patients and it is, in fact, no more than what is currently available under the Enhanced Primary Health Care initiative."

"If you really want to provide optimal treatment and keep people with diabetes out of hospital the focus must be on increasing access to multidisciplinary care, including allied health care," she said.

Ms Mioduchowski said that AHPA would like to work with the Government to fine-tune the new scheme so that it better addresses the needs of people with diabetes.

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For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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Members: Audiological Society of Australia, Australasian Podiatry Council, Australian Association of Social Workers, Australian Institute of Radiography, Australian Orthotic and Prosthetic Association, Australian Osteopathic Association, Australian Psychological Society, Australian Sonographers Association, Chiropractors' Association of Australia, Dietitians Association of Australia, Exercise & Sports Science Australia, Occupational Therapy Australia, Orthoptics Australia, Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Inc, Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, Speech Pathology Australia.

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