

MEDIA RELEASE

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Diabetes education offers chance to save \$3.9 billion

Australian healthcare cost savings would total \$3.9 billion in 2014 if diabetes education programs were made available to all 1.37 million Australians with diabetes, according to a new report.

Thousands of lives could also be improved if people with diabetes had universal access to education programs, according to a Deloitte Access Economics report, *Benefits of Credentialed Diabetes Educators to people with diabetes and Australia*, released today to mark National Diabetes Week (13-19 July).

For every dollar spent on diabetes education, more than \$16 in healthcare costs can be saved, amounting to a potential saving of more than \$443,000 per hour.

The report showed the urgency of revising funding for diabetes education, the CEO of the Australian Diabetes Educators Association (ADEA), Dr Joanne Ramadge said.

"Inadequate funding for diabetes education for the 1.37 million Australians with diabetes has resulted in spiralling healthcare costs and many people losing their quality of life," Dr Ramadge said.

Many private health insurance companies currently do not rebate diabetes education services, while Medicare funding is also inadequate. Furthermore, women with gestational diabetes are not able to claim any diabetes education rebate on Medicare or from most private health insurers.

The end result is that many Australians with diabetes either have to pay for consultation with a diabetes educator themselves or miss out on education altogether from qualified educators.

"This report demonstrates that diabetes education is effective in improving the self-management of diabetes and its costs are inexpensive relative to the healthcare costs incurred later on from poorly-managed diabetes. Diabetes education programs offer an extraordinary return on investment that this report shows should no longer be ignored," Dr Ramadge said.

"The World Health Organisation has indicated that diabetes education is a highly cost effective health measure – diabetes is a complex disease which can be much more effectively self-managed as a result of education."

Credentialed Diabetes Educators are health professionals who have completed an undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline, a graduate certificate in diabetes education, 1,800 hours of practice in diabetes education and a six month mentoring relationship with an experienced educator.

The report found that issues with funding for diabetes education mean that there are many hurdles for individuals with diabetes to access educators and more than half of them had not participated in a structured diabetes education program.

“It would cost \$237 million to provide diabetes education to every Australian with diabetes in 2014 – just six per cent of the healthcare bill that could arise as a result of inadequate diabetes education,” Dr Ramadge said.

“To put that in context, it would cost an average of \$173 for the year to provide comprehensive diabetes education to each Australian with diabetes and the average saving in healthcare costs would be \$2,827 – a net saving of \$2,654 per person after paying for the education program.

“For the sake of the hundreds of thousands of Australians who currently cannot access diabetes education, the system of funding and supporting diabetes education needs to be changed urgently.”

Deloitte Access Economics was commissioned by the ADEA to produce the report in order to provide an independent analysis of the cost effectiveness of diabetes education.

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About us

The Australian Diabetes Educators Association (ADEA) was founded in 1981 by a group of inspired registered nurses with a vision to standardise diabetes education nationally to provide diabetes management support to people with diabetes.

In 1986, ADEA introduced the certification trademark of the Credentialed Diabetes Educator (CDE) and since then, has been implementing the ADEA Credentialling program, a professional recognition and development program to support healthcare professionals providing diabetes education and care.

The Association has been growing and has become the leading organisation for healthcare professionals with a special interest in diabetes education.

For more information, come and talk with our staff at the ADEA Booth (stand 17) during the conference or visit our website www.adea.com.au.

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