



**The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP
Minister for Health**

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 3 June 2013 from the Standing Committee on Petitions, regarding a petition to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and to manage type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

The Australian Government recognises the significant burden that diabetes places on individuals and their families and is working hard to tackle present and future challenges relating to the disease. As part of this commitment, significant funding is being provided for a broad range of initiatives aimed at encouraging prevention of the disease and, in situations where prevention is not possible, ensuring appropriate support is available for affected individuals to effectively manage their diabetic conditions.

In recognition that diseases like type 2 diabetes can be prevented, the Government is providing up to \$932 million over nine years (from 2009-10) under the Council of Australian Governments National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health (NPAPH), to address the rising prevalence of lifestyle related chronic disease by laying the foundations for healthy behaviours in the daily lives of Australians.

Under the NPAPH, a Healthy Communities Initiative has been implemented to provide a targeted, progressive roll-out of community-based healthy lifestyle programs which aim to facilitate increased access to physical activity, healthy eating and healthy weight activities for disadvantaged groups and those not in the workforce.

With regard to risk assessment, the Government supported the development of the Australian type 2 diabetes risk assessment tool, which consists of a short list of questions that, when completed, provides a guide to a patient's current level of risk of developing type 2 diabetes over the next five years. The tool is available for use by clinicians and the general public and can be accessed from my Department's website.

Diabetes prevention measures also include the ongoing subsidisation of specific Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) items for medical practitioners (including GPs, but not including specialists or consultant physicians) to undertake health assessments for patients at risk of developing the disease.

These prevention measures are complemented by significant investments to support the management and treatment of diabetes in the Australian community. This support includes access to subsidised MBS items (including services provided by dietitians and diabetes educators), along with diabetes-specific medicines through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Provision of subsidised syringes and needles, blood glucose test strips, urine ketone test strips and insulin pump consumables is supported through the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS). The NDSS, which is expected to cost around \$1 billion over five years (from 2011-12) also provides a range of educational and information services to Registrants to assist in the best use of products and the effective self-management of diabetes. Free registration to the NDSS is available for anyone who is a resident in Australia, has been diagnosed with diabetes by a medical practitioner and holds a current Australian Medicare card or Department of Veterans' Affairs file number. A further measure, the Type 1 Diabetes Insulin Pump Program provides a means-tested subsidy to assist young people under the age of 18 years (who have type 1 diabetes) with the cost of purchasing an insulin pump.

In addition, the Government has implemented the Diabetes Care Project (DCP), which is being piloted over three years (from 2011-12) at a cost of more than \$33 million. The DCP will test a new model of health care delivery designed to improve care for people with diabetes by providing more consumer focused, coordinated multidisciplinary education and care. The evaluation of the DCP will inform new models of care for Australians with diabetes.

Further information on the work being undertaken by the Australian Government to combat diabetes can be found on my Department's website at www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pq-diabetes-gov.

Once again, thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Plibersek

8.7.13