



Dietitians NZ

Ngā Tohunga Mātai Kai



19th May 2017

Health Workforce New Zealand
Ministry of Health
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6145

Attention: info@healthworkforce.govt.nz

To whom it may concern

Re: Investment Approach - consultation submission

Dietitians are registered health professionals who meet standards required by the New Zealand Dietitians Board under the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act (HPCA) 2003. In New Zealand, by law, dietitians must be registered with the Dietitians Board and hold a current practising certificate, work within a specified scope of practice, participate in a continuing competency programme, and adhere to a Code of Ethics.

Dietitians New Zealand Incorporated (Dietitians NZ) is the professional association of registered dietitians and associated nutritional professionals. With a membership of approximately 640, we represent the largest group of fully trained food and nutrition professionals in New Zealand. Dietitians NZ exists to build a strong and sustainable profession that empowers New Zealanders around food and nutrition; and inspire change to enhance the health and wellbeing of Aotearoa, New Zealand. We trust the comments made in our submission will be given due consideration.

Dietitians NZ supports Health Workforce New Zealand's proposed investment approach to funding post-entry training of the future health workforce. However, only on the understanding there is a fair and transparent process put in place to prioritise funding.

Dietitians NZ endorse the adaptation of the funding model to support investment in the training health workforce to meet future health needs. Dietitians NZ see this as an opportunity to address the significant existing inequities in allocation of post-training funding that sees medicine getting the majority of the \$180 million allocation, whilst some other professional groups including dietetics receive no support. Dietitians NZ strongly believe that in order to ensure the health workforce can achieve the best outcomes for all New Zealanders in the future we need to ensure funding and support for post-entry training is available equitably to the entire health workforce rather than selected few.

Many of the challenges facing the NZ health system are related to our increasingly obesogenic environment and aging population. The New Zealand burden of diseases, injuries and risk factors study assesses what proportion of health loss is attributable to known modifiable risk factors, and are therefore potentially preventable (Ministry of Health, 2013). It estimates that nutrition related risk factors accounted for 9.4% of health loss in 2006, followed by overweight and obesity at 9.2%.

With significant shortages being reported in general practice (Ministry of Health, 2016), there is a need to up skill other health workforces to support the GPs and practice nurses and ensure patients are treated closer to home (Ministry of Health, 2016). Dietitians, with their expertise in nutrition and skill in behaviour change, are well placed to support this sector of the healthcare workforce. There is also good evidence to demonstrate the economic benefit of providing dietetic care in the community (Howatson & Wall, 2014). This recently published position paper and systematic review suggested that an estimated \$5 to \$6.40 saving (through reduced hospital admission and medical treatment) can be made for every dollar spent on health care provided by a NZ dietitian. However, there needs to be adequate funding and support to recruit and retain experienced dietitians working in this sector of the health system (Beckingsale, 2016).

The recently released NZ National Integrated Knowledge, Skills and Career Framework for Diabetes Dietitians 2016 provides an example of an area of dietetic practice where the dietitian, given the appropriate training opportunities, can develop a range of transferable clinical skills and work at the top of their scope of practice (Dietitians NZ and NZ Society for the Study of Diabetes, 2016). This document is also intended to influence education and training in NZ for dietitians requiring further training and specialist skills in the management of diabetes.

Dietitians NZ are also pleased to see opportunity for the health workforce working across all settings including those in private practice being able to submit proposals

for investment. A number of our members work in private practice and provide dietetic services to aged residential care and general practice.

Whilst Dietitians NZ support this proposal we would like to see the process for allocating investment being transparent and non-bureaucratic. This includes the need to ensure the following factors are considered:

- All stakeholders no matter their size/influence have equal input into the development, implementation and ongoing management of this approach
- That the expert advisory committee process is transparent and that there is appropriate representation from all professional groups and this is not dominated by one particular workforce
- That the prioritisation framework clearly states expectation that initiatives support inter-professional collaboration, service delivery and sustainability;
- smaller groups with less infrastructure are supported to develop bids (this consultation document mentions that there will be support for people/ organisations developing bids, but the type of support has not been explicitly mentioned)
- The evidence required needs to reflect the size of the bid and size of the group requesting funding. However the requirement for evidence needs to not restrict innovative new models/ways of working
- The process around investment and disinvestment needs to be clear to ensure sustainability.

References

Dietitians NZ and NZ Society for the Study of Diabetes, 2016. *NZ National Integrated Knowledge, Skills and Career Framework for Diabetes Dietitians 2016*. Wellington: Dietitians New Zealand. Retrieved from http://www.dietitians.org.nz/fileadmin/assets/Resource_Library/NZ_National_Integrated_Knowledge_Skills_and_Career_Framework_for_Diabetes_Dietitians_FINAL_December2016.pdf

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Ministry of Health. (2016). *New Zealand Health Survey: Annual Update of Key Results 2015/2016*. Wellington: Ministry of Health. Retrieved from <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/annual-update-key-results-2015-16-new-zealand-health-survey>

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission. We ask that our comments be taken into consideration.

Yours faithfully



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