

MEDIA RELEASE

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Sydney North Primary Health Network endorses the AMA position statement on the importance of nutrition

The Sydney North Primary Health Network (SNPHN) endorses the Australian Medical Association's (AMA) position statement (published 7 January 2018) on the importance of improving Australian's nutrition and eating habits for better health.

The AMA statement indicates that healthy active living and a nutritionally rich diet are significant contributors to positive health and well-being, no matter what age and stage of life. Poor nutrition and inactivity are significant contributors to the prevalence and severity of non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, and cardiovascular disease. The AMA also advocates government for a tax on sugar sweetened beverages to be introduced as a matter of priority.

Dr Harry Nespolon, local GP and Chair of Sydney North Primary Health Network, says "a sugar tax should not be seen as the solution to increased obesity in the Australian population, overweight Australians need to take a holistic approach to their health, decrease sugar intake is only one element of this approach.

The sugar tax in the UK has shown that soft drink producers will alter their products to meet changes in the taxation. Whether these changes are significant enough to causes changes in health outcomes only time will tell".

The SNPHN will work to utilise the AMA's suggested early intervention strategies, which have specific relevance within the vulnerable populations of the northern Sydney area, helping to improve community health both in the short and long-term.

SNPHN has established a range of healthy living programs across the region to deliver evidenced-based, early intervention strategies that address health risk factors. The focus is on those vulnerable population groups, such peoples from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The programs are co-designed and co-delivered with local community groups to address locally identified needs, driven by residents. The healthy living programs aim to:

- Build health literacy and individual engagement in proactive health self-management.
- Improve community health outcomes and well-being.
- Deliver evidenced-based early intervention strategies that address risk factors.

Extensive evidence demonstrates that connected and empowered communities are healthier communities overall.

Phone: (02) 9432 8250
Email: info@snhn.org.au
Address: Level 1, Building B
207 Pacific Highway, St Leonards NSW 2065
Post: PO Box 97, St Leonards NSW 1590
www.snhn.org.au

The SNPHN has a role to play in building confident and related communities to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities. Enhancing at-risk communities' knowledge of nutrition and healthy active lifestyles will yield both short and longer-term health gains.

END

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Damien Long

Ph: 0403 821 307

E: dlong@snhn.org.au



Phone: (02) 9432 8250
Email: info@snhn.org.au
Address: Level 1, Building B
207 Pacific Highway, St Leonards NSW 2065
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SNPHN LTD (ABN 38 605 353 884), trading as Sydney North Health Network.