

TASKFORCESUBMISSION: submission

NAME: John Lang

POSITION: President

ORGANISATION: HAPIA (Health and Productivity Institute of Australia)

SUBMISSION1: HAPIA represents the corporate wellness providers of Australia. We have 20 member organisations who account for 95% of the corporate wellness industry Australia wide.

We believe that Federal and State government support (both financial and legislative) for employee wellbeing, matched with funding from the recipient organisations, will provide the next great leap forward in the early detection and prevention of chronic disease.

Inadequacy of funding and ideas in Prevention in Australia

The NPHT is already well aware of the dilemma facing the Australian health system from the preventive standpoint. The dilemma is that 50% of health care costs are driven by chronic conditions which are largely caused by lifestyle, yet the health funding for prevention represents only 1.8% of the health budget. Although one can debate the actual numbers, the absurdity is that we are in a situation where 1.8% of funding is allocated to fix 50% of the problem. This, of itself, is sufficient to justify complete re-evaluation of the funding for preventive services in Australia. In addition, little innovation has been evident over the past 3-4 decades. We need to move beyond the "consciousness raising" approach provided by programs such as Quit/Life Be In It, into action oriented interventions.

We direct NPHT to the HAPIA submission made to the NHHRC earlier this year. It contains significant detail regarding the business case for prevention/early detection in the corporate/business sector (including the public service). We will not replicate these recommendations here, but rather provide a range of brief but practical suggestions as to how corporate wellness services can provide cost effective, outcome focused solutions which will impact significantly on health care costs in Australia over the next decade and beyond.

Why the Worksite?

There are a number of reasons why the worksite should be considered a setting in which primary prevention and early detection programs can be implemented;

- The workplace provides a captive audience of 10 million working Australians
- They average four Health Risk Factors per employee

- 1 in 3 have 5 or more risk factors
- 1 in 6 have 6 or more risk factors
- Venue is supplied/low infrastructure costs
- Full-time employees (ie. the majority of adult Australians) don't attend/access Community Health Facilities unless ill
- The workplace appears the only reasonable setting in which to practice primary prevention
- Employers benefit (and should/will support preventive/wellness initiatives)
- Many employers are already supporting such programs
- Australian and International experience shows that the programs work

What to Do

HAPIA welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with the NPHT to design a world class workplace wellness strategy. A snapshot of what such a program might look like is provided here.

For each worksite in Australia;

- Online or paper based HRA (lifestyle and health behaviours)
- Face to face biometric assessment of BP, Blood Glucose, Blood Cholesterol and Waist/WHR/BMI
- Recommendations and support
- Targeted interventions for those at risk
- Health education/literacy programs
- Referral to GP for clinically relevant findings
- Assessment of the workplace (ie. CHEW - Checklist of Health Promoting Environments at Worksites)

Cost

Our model proposes cost sharing of the assessments/interventions between the government and the employer. A reasonably comprehensive multidisciplinary program can be delivered for \$100/\$150 per employee; this would mean federal support of \$50-\$75 per employee over the first few years of the program.

Assuming a take-up of 60% and a 3 year roll-out, the first phase of such a program would cost the Federal Government \$100-\$150M per annum (well within Minister Roxon's December 14th announcement of \$874M). This represents approximately 0.1% of the annual Commonwealth health budget.

PRIVACY: yes

SUBMIT: Submit