



Australian Health Care Reform Alliance

C/- PO Box 280 Deakin West ACT 2600 ABN 64 051 645 674
www.healthreform.org.au

Promoting Prevention



Preventive health is the most cost-effective use of our health dollars. Given the ageing of our population and the increasing rates of chronic disease, it is important that we invest in the future health and well-being of our community through evidence-based and targeted preventive health programs.

Investing in prevention and public health keeps people well and out of hospital, improving productivity and reducing pressure on the health system. Australia has a proud and world-leading record of successful preventive health campaigns, such as tobacco reduction and road accident reduction strategies, which have very significantly reduced harmful behaviours, illness and death rates, and the massive health care costs associated with them.

However, [there are many gaps in Australia's current preventive health efforts](#), including in relation to obesity, injury prevention, mental health and domestic violence. Increased efforts in these key areas can help Australians maximise their health and well-being and reduce unnecessary and inefficient health spending.

To achieve this, AHCRA supports increasing the level of Federal funding for prevention from 1.5% to 5% of the health budget. This would increase health spending in this area by around \$5 billion per year – less than the amount currently allocated to the PHI rebate. One important use for this funding would be to improve nutrition across our population.

Optimum nutrition is fundamental to good health at all stages of life. It is essential for normal growth and development, resistance to infection and protection against chronic disease, obesity and premature death.



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However, the available evidence indicates that the diets of most Australians do not nearly meet the recommendations made in the Australian Dietary Guidelines. For example, [less than 4% of Australians meet the recommended usual daily intake of vegetables](#). Australia also has one of the highest rates of obesity in the world with over 50% of adults classified as overweight or obese.

AHCRA supports immediate, evidence-based and comprehensive national action to address the health, social and economic costs of increasing rates of obesity and other diet related chronic diseases. This should be based on a social determinants of health perspective and address the wide range of economic, cultural, geographical and social barriers to a healthy diet.

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