

Media Release

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CHC welcomes UK call for free vitamins for children

The Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia (CHC) welcomes the UK's Chief Medical Officer's preventive health plan for children, which includes a call for their National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to examine the cost-effectiveness of offering vitamins A, C and D to all children under five.

In a report entitled "*Our Children Deserve Better, Prevention Pays*" England's Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies, explains that more needs to be done to give children a good start with their health, and that acting early would save taxpayers' money. Currently in England, the NHS offers free vitamins A, C and D to all children aged six months to four years from low-income families.

In her annual report, Prof Dame Sally Davies says extending the scheme would protect more children and save money. And she said the UK lags behind many other European countries.

In comparison, here in Australia, no such preventive health scheme exists.

"Australia, too, needs to be more ambitious about giving every child the best start in life, and to date, the contribution complementary medicines can make has been absent from Australia's preventive health agenda," says Chief Executive Officer of the CHC, Mr Carl Gibson.

"As the peak industry body in Australia for vitamins, minerals and supplements - known as complementary medicines - and as a supporter of preventive health, the CHC is heartened by the publication of the UK report and it's recognition of the enormous potential for complementary medicines to demonstrate savings from disease prevention and health promotion".

Mr Gibson went on to say, "preventive health is an essential move towards improving the cost-effectiveness of the Australian healthcare system and alleviating pressure on the Government's health budget".

"Research and education on the cost-effectiveness of consumer and government spending on complementary medicines must be a priority for Australia."

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