

## Media Release



14 March 2014

### Now is the time for Preventive Health Focus

Amid the Government's current movements toward reining in health expenditure, and calls for a revamp of the health system to ensure sustainability, Mr Carl Gibson, chief executive officer of the Complementary Healthcare Council (CHC) believes now is the time to incorporate a stronger focus on preventive health.

Carl Gibson, at the APP Pharmacy Guild Annual National Conference said; "Preventive health is an essential move towards improving the cost-effectiveness of the Australian healthcare system, but we realise a critical issue for consumers, health professionals and governments alike is understanding the benefits and cost effectiveness of health related interventions."

The recently published Frost & Sullivan report *Smart Prevention – Health Care Cost Savings Resulting from the Targeted Use of Dietary Supplements*, found the use of key complementary medicines, including omega-3s, B6, B12 and folic acid, could reduce hospital costs by \$US billions per year.

Here in Australia, the Access Economics report, *Cost effectiveness of complementary medicines*, commissioned by the National Institute of Complementary Medicine in 2009, also found large savings could be attained. For example, the use of St John's wort – which has been found to be similarly effective as taking a standard anti-depressant for mild to moderate depression – could potentially save over \$ 50 million for the Australian health budget.<sup>1</sup>

"Three quarters of Australians already proactively use complementary medicines (vitamins, minerals, supplements and herbals) for prevention and wellness, and we believe there is a major opportunity to reflect this in the current health policy debate."

"The CHC acknowledges the National Health and Medical Research Council's recent focus on complementary medicines as a part of their broader strategic approach to health practice and policy."

"The complementary medicines industry can help to deliver Australia's health objectives and is keen to work with the Government to achieve this," Mr Gibson said.

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*As the peak industry body in Australia for vitamins, minerals and supplements, the CHC represents an industry that is devoted to improving the health of the Australian community through the promotion of sustainable health and wellbeing.*

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<sup>1</sup> Access Economics Pty Ltd, Report for The National Institute of Complementary Medicine, Cost effectiveness of complementary medicines, 2010, piii.

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