

## Department of Health and Human Services

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MTS No.: 49061 - CHO - PoH

Ms Kate Gilbert  
President  
The Type 1 Diabetes Network Inc  
PO Box 1293  
KENSINGTON VIC 3031

Dear Ms Gilbert

Thank you for your letter of 12 July 2009 regarding 'A Statement of Issues affecting Australians with Type 1 Diabetes.

The Minister for Health, Lara Giddings MP, has requested that I respond to you on her behalf.

The Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services is aware of the increasing prevalence of Type 1 Diabetes and the impact it has, not only on the person with the condition and his/her immediate and extended family, but also into the wider community particularly in the school and workplace.

In Tasmania there are 3,313 people with Type 1 Diabetes ranging in age from under 5 years to over 76 years. There are 180 children under the age of sixteen years; 588 young adults in the 16 – 35 age group; and 2,545 aged 35 years and over.

Thirty six children and 208 adults have been trained and receive ongoing monitoring and support in the use of Subcutaneous Continuous Insulin Infusions (CSII) therapy – so-called Insulin Pump therapy.

Multi-disciplinary diabetes self-management education services are provided for people with Type 1 Diabetes by Nationally Accredited Diabetes Centres (NADCs) at the three major hospitals in Tasmania. Medical services are provided by endocrinologists and paediatricians in the public and private health sector and some general practitioners.

Tasmania has a widely dispersed population, and some difficulty in recruiting and retaining specialist services. A flexible and collaborative approach between specialist and primary health care services is essential.

Separate age-appropriate multidisciplinary clinics and diabetes self management education sessions are provided for children and their families, adolescent and young adults, and adults with Type 1 Diabetes.

Multidisciplinary transition clinics for adolescents and young adults are conducted on a regular basis at Royal Hobart and Launceston General Hospitals. These clinics are held in the late afternoon/early evening to allow clients to attend without disruption to schooling, work, and socialisation.

This ensures the focus is on issues pertinent to adolescents and young adults and we are finding the result is fewer clients of this age being “lost to contact”.

All NADCs provide school visits for children with Type I Diabetes particularly the recently diagnosed and also on an as-needs basis if there are sick day issues which are impacting on the child’s successful school experience.

The NADCs at the Launceston General Hospital and the North West Regional Hospital conduct two to three training programs per year for teachers who have children with Type I Diabetes in their class. The programs are always offered at the beginning of the school year and again during the year.

Currently the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services is conducting the *Enhancement of Diabetes Services* project with one-off Commonwealth government funding.

This two-year project is designed to enhance current services, and to further facilitate integrated sustainable services statewide for people with complex diabetes, including all people with Type I Diabetes, across all regions and continuum of care.

The first year round of funding to the three NADCs in the 08/09 financial year was specifically allocated to upgrade and extend their technology and data collection capacity.

This funding included the purchase of additional Insulin Pumps, Continuous Blood Glucose Monitoring Systems (CGMS) and covered the costs associated with the statewide implementation of a paediatric Type I Diabetes register and recall system, currently only established in North West Tasmania.

The additional Insulin Pumps will be of particular value to women with Type I Diabetes during a pregnancy. Insulin pumps are also loaned to people with Type I Diabetes for a trial period to assist in their decision-making to purchase the equipment, or not.

All NADCs now have sufficient CGMS units available for adults and children with insulin treated diabetes (all types) who require 3 - 5 consecutive 24 hour monitoring for diagnostic and insulin-adjustment purposes.

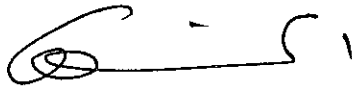
This service is proving to be a very effective use of new technology and is provided free-of-charge on an as-needs basis, not just one-off.

At the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH), CGMS monitoring is being used for children with Type I Diabetes with unstable blood glucose levels. The CGMS is used for 3-5 days prior to a planned clinic appointment to record real-time readings, so that insulin adjustments can be made in a safe and timely manner by the endocrinologist or paediatrician at the planned appointment, thus also avoiding additional time and cost for unplanned and/or emergency hospital visits.

Thank you for giving the Tasmanian Government the opportunity to highlight the new initiatives being implemented in this state.

I wish you well and hope you have a very successful and enjoyable time at the World Diabetes Congress in Montreal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig White', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig White  
Chief Health Officer

7 August 2009