

## PRESS RELEASE

# Act now on lifestyle changes

## World Diabetes Day, 14 November, 2011

Act now to avoid diabetes is the message for World Diabetes Day and this year Queenslanders are being urged to learn about how, where possible, they can reduce their risk of diabetes and its complications.

Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local director Dr Trish Baker said every day counts when it comes to diabetes, especially Type 2 diabetes, which can be prevented through healthy lifestyle choices.

"The Medicare Local is supporting Diabetes Australia - Queensland in its campaign to educate Queenslanders about the serious impact of diabetes," Dr Baker said.

"The statistics tell us that up to 325,000 people already have diabetes in this State, and at least 60 more are diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes every day," she said.

According to Diabetes Australia - Queensland, diabetes rates have tripled in the past two decades and are expected to triple again in the next two decades. This will cause a five-fold escalation in the cost of diabetes – more than any other health condition.

The cost of diabetes in Queensland was about \$6.9 billion in 2008.

"The Medicare Local is working with allied health and community based organisations to improve the planning and coordination of local primary health care services," Dr Baker said.

"Medicare Locals are changing the approach to primary health care service delivery so that it becomes as much about education and prevention as it is about having access to the right health professional.

"Over time this will lead to better health outcomes for people in our region, including those at risk of diabetes," she said.

Dr Baker said the consequences and complications of Type 2 diabetes can include heart disease, kidney failure, impaired vision and circulation problems. The symptoms may include:

- high blood pressure
- excessive thirst and urination
- fatigue
- irritability
- blurred vision
- tingling or numbness in the feet

"However, patients can now take a simple questionnaire that can help to identify if they have risk factors associated with developing Type 2 diabetes," Dr Baker said.

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Known as the AUSDRISK tool, the questionnaire is a simple first step that can help to rule out potential risk for Type 2 diabetes. If the results indicate they are at risk, patients should discuss the results with their GP, who may then offer to conduct a more comprehensive health check.

The AUSDRISK tool is particularly targeted towards people aged between 40 and 49 years. The aim is to identify people in this age group who may be at risk of developing the disease later in life and provide them with access to early treatment.

To find out more about the AUSDRISK Tool or to take the questionnaire, people can talk to staff at their local general practice, or visit the Diabetes Australia - Queensland World Diabetes Day campaign website, where they can also view an educational video clip.

Visit: <http://www.diabetesqueensland.org.au/worldDiabetesDay2011.html>

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### About Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local

The Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local was established by GPpartners Ltd, the division of general practice located on Brisbane's north side, with support and involvement from a number of local organisations representing providers and users of primary care services.

On 1 July 2011, GPpartners Ltd transferred its programs, services and staff to the Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local, which became the first fully functional Medicare Local in Australia.

The Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local will work with health services and support the communities within Brisbane's northern suburbs, the Moreton Bay Regional Council and a small part of the Somerset Regional Council.

This region has an approximate population of 850,000 and is predominantly an urban region but also includes regional and rural areas in the far northern and western areas of the catchment.

The region includes the areas formerly covered by GPpartners Ltd and Moreton Bay General Practice Network, and aligns with the Metro North Local Hospital Network.

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