

Grampians Region HACC Guiding Principles

WHAT CAN A DIETITIAN DO WITHIN THEIR ROLE?

FOR YOUR CLIENTS AND FOR YOUR ORGANISATION (April 2015)

Grampians Region HACC Guiding Principle:

The Grampians Region HACC Program promotes effective working relationships between HACC funded Dietitian and Living at Home Assessment and Care Planning Officers.

Dietitians graduate from universities accredited by the Dietitians Association of Australia.

The key purpose of the profession of dietetics is to contribute to the promotion of health and the prevention and treatment of illness by optimising the nutrition of communities and individuals. (Dietitians Association of Australia, Scope of Framework 2014). An Accredited Practicing Dietitian is the specialist service for referral regarding nutrition advice.

The Grampians Region HACC program has a number of dietitians who are engaged to work with you and your clients to assist them in improving their nutritional status and maximising their health and wellbeing.

Part of good practice in supporting older people and people with disabilities is to look for the reasons behind changing abilities and seek assistance for the person to overcome them instead of introducing/increasing services without review. Many older people will find that as more is done for them they will lose the advantage of independence and control.

Dietitians have a vital role to play in helping people stay independent and active. They will be able to assist in a number of ways:

Key roles that the dietitian can play include:

- Assess nutritional status and provide evidence-based nutrition care plans for individual clients – assist clients and community staff to implement these plans as appropriate.
- Conduct assessment, management and treatment of a wide variety of chronic diseases such as malnutrition, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal conditions and overweight and obesity.
- Ensure centre-based and delivery meal services meets the HACC guidelines – give them a call for advice and assistance.
- Assist HACC service providers in Planned Activity Groups or Meals on Wheels to support the delivery of quality nutrition and food.
- Provide education and support to community support workers and food service workers
- Advocate for good nutrition by attending community events, health promotion activities, conferences and meetings
- Provide dietetic services directly to HACC eligible clients in clinic, outreach services and home visits.

Some creative suggestions for engaging a dietitian in your workplace include:

- **Group supermarket tours to provide education about food packaging and nutrition information panels**
- **Group cooking sessions as part of social events and respite options**
- **Cooking groups for folk living alone and/or people caring for a family member with specific dietary needs**
- **Education and training for Community Support Workers and volunteers**
- **Nutritional analysis of meals and snacks in everyday life and at community centres where HACC clients attend**
- **Joint assessment with Living at Home Assessment Officers**

Dietitians are experts in providing evidence-based client-centred care which incorporates the client's family and carers to ensure the best client outcomes. They can work with clients with unintentional weight loss, excessive weight gain, gastrointestinal issues such as celiac disease or IBS, diabetes, heart disease and many other issues. Engaging a Dietitian in your practice could broaden your service delivery models and assist in the enhancement of client independence and quality of life. There may be a number of other ways a Dietitian could be of assistance. Please contact a HACC Dietitian to discuss opportunities for their involvement.

Dietitians are also there to assist Living at Home Assessors and their clients through secondary consultation (advice and suggestions) or by providing the types of assessment listed above to assist in the enhancement of client independence and quality of life.

Engaging dietitians in your practice can broaden your horizons in relation to client choice and service delivery techniques. They can provide training for family members/friends and Community Care Workers/Support Workers in how best to work with and support the client. They can assist you to help put the principles of Person Centred Care into practice and build them into your care planning and service delivery models.