



THE BRITISH DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

The Professional Association for Registered Dietitians
5th Floor, Charles House, 148/9 Great Charles Street Queensway, Birmingham B3 3HT
Tel: 0121 200 8080 Fax: 0121 200 8081



M e d i a R e l e a s e

Embargoed until 13.00BST Tuesday 19 June 2007

MAKE NUTRITION MATTER – DIETITIANS CALL FOR URGENT ACTION

The British Dietetic Association (BDA) today launched its manifesto, outlining key priorities for dietitians both professionally and in the context of improving the nutritional health of the Nation.

The new manifesto – entitled **Make Nutrition Matter** – was launched by the Chairman of the BDA, Judith Catherwood, at the Association's prestigious national conference, in Belfast. In her opening speech to delegates, Judith Catherwood highlighted the pledges that have been made, from the government of all four home countries on food, nutrition and health, and she called for a further commitment to be made so that these pledges can be realised. She said: "Many of the government's plans on nutrition and health rely on dietitians and dietetic support workers within and out with the NHS if they are to be delivered effectively. The British Dietetic Association urges government to ensure every public health department across the UK employs a dietitian to deliver the public health nutrition strategy for the population it serves."

She continued: "While much has been done to publicise and debate the right approach to improving nutritional health across the UK, progress is slow. Dietitians believe in the importance of health to the success and development of our communities and yet the opportunities to deliver change are stifled by funding crises, barriers to change and a lack of long term funding and vision by those in the highest government offices. Our manifesto focuses on where dietitians perceive the frustrations lie and on what government can do to resolve them."

Website: <http://www.bda.uk.com>

One of the most significant areas where action is urgently needed is obesity. Speaking about this, Judith Catherwood said: “The rates of obesity are rising across the UK and the rates of childhood obesity are rising faster than in adulthood. Being overweight increases your likelihood of having diabetes, heart disease, cancer and stroke. While current public education campaigns may be helping some in our community, the rates of health inequalities are rising. Those who live in deprived and socially isolated communities need the expert support of dietitians more than ever, and yet our members are finding funding for initiatives to improve diet increasingly difficult to sustain.”

The BDA is calling on Governments to make a long term commitment to nutrition health improvement and make current funding recurring if public health promises are to be delivered.

The manifesto outlines the increasingly important roles that dietitians play in health care policy and delivery in areas such as:

- Improving health and reducing health inequalities
- Increasing access to health care through service modernisation, reducing waiting times, extended roles or the development of new roles
- Increasing and improving the knowledge and skills of health and social care staff in delivering nutritional care of patients
- Working with communities to improve nutritional wellbeing

Copies of the full manifesto are available from the BDA website www.bda.uk.com from Tuesday 19th June.

The BDA Annual Conference and Awards are to be hosted in Belfast from 19th to 21st June and promise to bring lively discussion and debate over hot nutrition issues, from experts working in industry, academia and the NHS, and from the whole island of Ireland, in addition to England, Scotland and Wales. For more details about the conference programme, which includes sessions on improving hospital food, nutrition and genetics, functional foods and alternative dietary approaches for obesity, go to the BDA website www.bda.uk.com

- Ends -

Website: <http://www.bda.uk.com>

Notes to Editors

1. The British Dietetic Association Conference will be held at The Europa Hotel in Belfast, on 19th – 21st June 2007.
2. The conference programme is available at www.bda.uk.com. Journalists wanting more information, or to arrange for a press pass, should contact Dr Frankie Phillips on 01626 362474 or 07908 712277. Email: pr@bda.uk.com
3. To arrange an interview with Judith Catherwood contact John Liddle or Pippa Rimmer on 07957 355416.
4. The British Dietetic Association, founded in 1936, is the professional association for registered dietitians in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the nation's largest organisation of food and nutrition professionals with over 5,000 members. About two-thirds of members are employed in the National Health Service. The remaining members work in education, industry, research, sport settings or freelance.

Registered dietitians hold the only legally-recognisable graduate qualification in nutrition and dietetics. They are experts in interpreting and translating the science of nutrition into practical ways of promoting nutritional well-being, disease treatment and the prevention of nutrition-related problems. Their advice is sound and based on current scientific evidence.

Registration, awarded by the Health Professionals Council, is an indication that a dietitian is fit to practise and is working within an agreed statement of conduct.

For further details about the British Dietetic Association, please visit our websites:
www.bda.uk.com
www.bdaweightwise.com
www.teenweightwise.com