



Media Release

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DIETITIANS PLAN TO JOIN FORCES TO IMPROVE PATIENT RESOURCES

The British Dietetic Association (BDA) announced today that it has started discussions with the Scottish Nutrition and Diet Resources Initiative (SNDRí), an established provider of diet and nutrition resources for patients, to consider a merger over the next three year period. Judith Catherwood, Honorary Chairman of the BDA, and Leona O'Reilly, Project Manager from the Scottish Nutrition and Diet Resources Initiative (SNDRí), made the announcement at the BDA's annual conference in Belfast.

The proposal to merge the two organisations is supported by the BDA Council and SNDRí's funding body (Scottish government) and is viewed as a major step forward for health professionals in public health.

Both the BDA and SNDRí are not-for-profit organisations with a core aim of maximising public health through supporting dietetic practice.

Leona O'Reilly said: "SNDRí is an initiative conceived by dietitians, for dietitians and driven by dietitians. We produce a range of easily accessible resources on nutrition and diet, which give consistent health messages to the public, avoid duplication of effort and ultimately improve the quality of patient contact time. These resources are used by dietitians, practice nurses, GPs and pharmacists and others to help individuals prevent or treat a disease and ultimately improve a person's quality of life."

SNDRí have approximately 160 titles in their portfolio ranging from how to manage renal disease through diet, to a culturally sensitive leaflet on how to manage iron deficiency anaemia in a South Asian community.

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Judith Catherwood added: “Diet is a major factor in the prevention of diseases like stroke, cancer and diabetes. Nutrition is also a vital component in the treatment of diseases and patients need access to good quality nutritional information. By joining forces with SNDRí we will become the recognised provider of nutrition and diet resources across the UK by providing a better service for dietitians and other health professionals.

“We also want to grow the provision of first-line diet resources, especially in light of the shift from hospital to community care and the importance of multidisciplinary working. With SNDRí we can also better examine the impact of diet and nutrition resources on individuals’ dietary behaviour and their quality of life.”

SNDRí and the BDA believe that together they will be stronger, have greater influence as a combined force and deliver more effectively for dietitians and other health professionals who need quality nutrition and diet resources in their day-to-day work.

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Notes to Editors

1. The British Dietetic Association Conference will be held on Tuesday 19th to Thursday 21st June 2007 at The Europa Hotel, Belfast.

2. Further information on the conference is available from:

Dr Frankie Phillips National PR Officer, The British Dietetic Association. Tel: 01626 362473, Mobile: 07908 712277, Email: pr@bda.uk.com

3. 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 website: www.bda.uk.com

4. The Scottish Nutrition and Diet Resources Initiative (SNDRi) in its current form is a continuation of the work of the Scottish Diet Sheet Initiative (SDSi). SDSi was established by State Registered Dietitians in Scotland in the 1980s in response to the results of a study which identified the need to make available high quality, evidence-based diet sheets and leaflets for patients in all parts of Scotland in a cost effective manner.

In 2001, SDSi became SNDRi. This happened in specific response to recommendations 56 and 60 of the Scottish Diet Action Plan. The Scottish Diet Action Plan recognised that greater priority should be given *“to providing adequate dietary education and counselling skills to enable health professional staff, including primary care teams, to place increased emphasis on giving dietary advice to patients, both opportunistically and routinely”* (Recommendation 56). The Scottish Diet Action Plan also encouraged the community dietetic service, in conjunction with the Health Education Board for Scotland, to *“enhance their national strategy for developing educational materials, and...consider what other methods of supporting their professional colleagues may be possible in securing the necessary changes in the diet of the Scottish population”* (Recommendation 60).

On the back of these recommendations, SNDRi initially received three years' funding from the Scottish government to have dedicated staff and a base within the campus of Glasgow Caledonian University. From 2003 funding was extended on a year-by-year basis to enable SNDRi to address recommendations 19, 61 and 64 from the Scottish Diet Action Plan.