

*** MEDIA RELEASE ***

EMBARGO: Thursday, 20 October 2016

New Osteoporosis National Action Plan Sets Out Vision to Tackle Major National Health Issue

Action Plan Calls For National Strategy For Research Into Curing Osteoporosis And To Combat The Burden Of Fractures

A new Osteoporosis National Action Plan, the result of a 12 month collaboration among a national alliance of stakeholder groups, launches today, World Osteoporosis Day. The plan presents a joint vision to address this major health issue as a matter of urgency.

In Australia it is estimated 1.2 million people are affected by osteoporosis.¹ It is a disease that does not just affect women. Men account for up to 30% of all fractures related to osteoporosis and their associated costs². The cost of fractures is the largest component cost of poor bone health in Australia, presenting a serious burden to the healthcare system. Musculoskeletal health care accounts for one of the highest health care costs in Australia³.

The Action Plan points the way to broadening the awareness of the importance of bone health, improving the bone health of the Australian population, and the outcomes for people with osteoporosis. The plan lists recommendations that focus on prevention, treatment, impact and cure and calls for a national strategy for research into curing osteoporosis.

The osteoporosis national alliance of interest groups include; (in alphabetical order); Australian Institute for Musculoskeletal Science, Australian and New Zealand Bone and Mineral Society, Garvan Institute of Medical Research, Monash University, *MOVE muscle, bone & joint health*, Osteoporosis Australia, University of Sydney, University of Melbourne and UNSW Australia.

Professor John Eisman AO, Director of Clinical Translation and Advanced Education, Garvan Institute of Medical Research, comments, "By convening experts and all medical and community stakeholders, there was a unique opportunity to develop a National Action Plan. This plan highlights the need to make real change via integrated strategies for Governments at State and Federal levels. We consider an integrated national strategy is the critical next step to improving care while reducing the health care and individual human costs of osteoporosis."

Greg Lyubomirsky, CEO, Osteoporosis Australia, says, "There is limited awareness of osteoporosis within the community and amongst healthcare professionals. The majority of Australians (58%) have limited understanding of what osteoporosis is and 60% do not understand who is most at risk.⁴ We see the National Action Plan playing a critical role in educating Australians to help make a difference from a preventive and treatment perspective."

Adding to this, Professor Peter Ebeling AO, Head of the Department of Medicine in the School of Clinical Sciences at Monash Health, says, "We need to further develop GP engagement programs and systems to enable them to identify patients at risk, including men, and then have them investigated and treated for osteoporosis."

¹ Henry M, Pasco JA, Nicolson GC, et al. Prevalence of osteoporosis in Australian men and women: Geelong Osteoporosis Study. *Med J Australia* 2011;195:321-322.

² Osteoporosis Australia, *Facts & Figures*

³ Chronic disease: Australia's biggest health challenges (<http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129547726>)

⁴ Osteoporosis Community Awareness and Knowledge Survey, September 2015 (commissioned by Garvan Research Foundation and conducted by QAI Consulting.)

Professor Markus Seibel, Professor of Endocrinology at the University of Sydney further supports the need for a national strategy to help address preventive programs for further fractures. “There is limited awareness of secondary fracture prevention programs in the hospital and primary healthcare setting. 80% of women (and 90% of men) who suffer a fragility fracture receive no treatment to prevent further fractures.⁵”

Professor Gustavo Duque, representative of The Australia and New Zealand Bone and Mineral Society (ANZBMS) and Director of the Australian Institute for Musculoskeletal Science (AIMSS), sees how the national strategy can help to remove obstacles to closing the knowledge-practice gap in primary care to improve the recognition and assessment of risk. “There is a general lack of awareness of osteoporosis by both the patient and the doctor, and a low priority of osteoporosis in the competition with other comorbidities, particularly in the elderly.”

Linda Martin, Chief Executive Office, *MOVE muscle, bone & joint health* supports the national strategy to develop effective self-management resources for people with osteoporosis (and their carers). “A national strategy will help to provide information and skills to enhance the lives of people with osteoporosis and their ability to take an active role in their own healthcare.”

World Osteoporosis Day is a timely platform from which to launch this National Action Plan, driving much needed awareness not only amongst health care professionals but also to the wider Australian population. The Plan paves the way to establishing osteoporosis as a National Health Priority in its own right – a shared vision for all those involved.

ENDS

To download a copy of the Osteoporosis National Action Plan, visit www.garvan.org.au

About the National Action Plan

The National Action Plan clearly sets out three key areas for action - Increasing Awareness & Support, Improving Osteoporosis Prevention & Treatment, Finding a Cure for Osteoporosis. The National Action Plan also outlines 20 recommendations to achieve these action items. The report stresses the human and clinical burden of osteoporosis and related fractures will only get worse unless action is taken now to combat this major health issue.

Osteoporosis National Action Plan Working Group (in alphabetical order)

Professor Peter Croucher

- Chair Osteoporosis National Action Plan Working Group
- Garvan Institute of Medical Research

Professor Gustavo Duque

- University of Melbourne
- Australian and New Zealand Bone and Mineral Society (ANZBMS)
- Australian Institute for Musculoskeletal Science (AIMSS)

Professor Peter R Ebeling AO

- Monash University
- Medical Director, Osteoporosis Australia
- Board, International Osteoporosis Foundation

Professor John Eisman AO

- UNSW Australia

⁵ *First National Forum on Secondary Fracture Prevention in Sydney, hosted by the Australia & New Zealand Bone and Mineral Society (ANZBMS)*

- Garvan Institute of Medical Research
- St Vincent's Hospital
- University of Notre Dame

Mr Andrew Giles

- CEO Garvan Research Foundation

Mr Greg Lyubomirsky

- CEO Osteoporosis Australia

Ms Linda Martin

- CEO *MOVE, muscle, bone & joint health*

Professor Markus Seibel

- University of Sydney
- ANZAC Research Institute
- Concord Hospital, Sydney LHD
- International Federation of Musculoskeletal Research Societies (IFMRS)

Issued by QUAY Communications on behalf of Garvan Research Foundation

For more information and to arrange an interview opportunity with a representative from the Osteoporosis National Action Plan Working Group or to discuss case studies please call;

- QUAY Communications, Emma Norgrove, M: 0499 688 001, T: 02 9386 9161
- QUAY Communications, Cheryl Pettinau, M: 0424 157 714, T: 02 9386 9161