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Gippsland Paediatrics

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Minister for Health and Ageing Nicola Roxon yesterday announced an expansion of the Type 1 Diabetes Insulin Pump Program, with a dramatically increased government subsidy of up to **80% of the purchase price of an insulin pump.**

The Type 1 Diabetes Insulin Pump Program was launched in November 2008 and provided a means-tested subsidy of up to \$2,500 towards the purchase of an insulin pump for children under 18. It was the first time that the Australian government had provided subsidies for this important technology. The new subsidy levels will provide a potential maximum of \$6,400 and a minimum of \$500 depending on the cost price of the insulin pump.

Carers of children under 18 with type 1 diabetes will be able to apply for a significantly increased, means-tested subsidy of up to 80% of the cost of an insulin pump.

This announcement follows publication of research showing the effectiveness of insulin pump therapy in uninsured children by Gippsland paediatrician, Dr. Peter Goss, in the Medical Journal of Australia in January. The research demonstrated that by utilising a multidisciplinary team approach, uninsured children targeted by the Government program gained significant improvement in medical control which if sustained would reduce long term complications of diabetes. Dr Goss had previously published results in an international journal of another study demonstrating improved quality of life and patient satisfaction using the Gippsland model of care for child diabetes.

The article concluded that "To improve short-term health and reduce long-term diabetic complications in families who cannot afford insulin pumps, government programs need to make IPT more accessible to those families and support local multidisciplinary IPT teams.

Dr Goss, now a member of the clinical advisory board of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation insulin pump program, was thrilled with the announcement by Minister Roxon.

"This is a great step forward for children with diabetes who could not afford private insurance and therefore did not have access to insulin pump therapy" Dr Goss said. "Because of the generosity of the local community groups such as Rotary and Lions clubs, the Kate Buntine Children's Trust and the Shane Warne Foundation in funding many local uninsured children with diabetes to purchase insulin pumps, our team were able to present a very strong case to Government to change their policy. We worked hard to collate the research data and present it at scientific meetings and in peer reviewed journals to help convince the Minister of the benefits of equity of access to insulin pump therapy. The Gippsland Paediatrics team were able to fundraise 19 pumps and were easily the largest users of the previous insulin pump program in Australia with the best published outcomes of medical control of child diabetes in Australia. We acknowledge the support and the lobbying by local member Darren Chester who presented our research directly to the Minister."

"This is a huge win and all those locals who contributed, the local Rotary and Lions Clubs and the Shane Warne Foundation should be congratulated!"

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