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Intergenerational disadvantage cycle needs to be broken

There is an urgent need to do more to break the cycle of intergenerational disadvantage that is affecting many of our children says Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation's (Congress) CEO Ms Donna Ah Chee.

On the second day of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) 44th Annual and 20th Chronic Diseases Network Conference in Alice Springs, the primary focus is on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and strategies to address the cycle of ill health, chronic conditions and low life expectancy.

"A major priority in the prevention of premature death and chronic disease among Aboriginal people in Australia is the prevention of harm caused by alcohol through adopting effective strategies proven to reduce the levels of dangerous consumption at a population level," continued Ms Ah Chee.

The latest *Australia's health 2016* report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released last week shows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are 3.5 times more likely to have diabetes and twice as likely to have coronary heart disease.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples living in remote and low socioeconomic areas have an even greater chance of developing a chronic disease and dying from it. This Conference addresses the link between public health and chronic conditions while considering the social determinants of health. Generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are being affected by these determinants and the cycle needs to stop," said PHAA CEO Michael Moore.

"Prevention initiatives to deter tobacco and alcohol use and improve nutrition and physical activity need to be implemented to reduce the preventable diseases like type II diabetes in these communities. The cycle needs to be broken for the adults currently managing their symptoms and for their children who have not yet been affected," said Mr Moore.

Ms Ah Chee says the Conference is an opportunity to bring attention to proposed strategies key to addressing prevalent health issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

"So much of the adverse impacts of poverty and other social determinants of health are mediated to children through the care and stimulation they receive in their early years. Many parents struggle to overcome their own health issues and the impact of their own poverty and they need additional support for their children," said Ms Ah Chee.

"Congress has developed an integrated model for child and family services that provides a holistic service and program response to this issue within a comprehensive primary health care service. In addition to making Australia a more equal and fairer society through redistributive policies, including taxation reforms, there is an urgent need to provide key evidence based early childhood programs for disadvantaged children. This is the "bottom up" pathway to greater individual and collective control, equality and social inclusion," said Ms Ah Chee.

The joint [PHAA 44th Annual Conference and 20th Chronic Diseases Network Conference](#) will be held from 18 – 21 September 2016 in Alice Springs, NT. The theme is Protection, Prevention, Promotion, Healthy Futures: Chronic Conditions and Public Health. #PHAACDN2016

For further information/comment:

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