



Alliance for the Prevention
of Mental Disorders



EVERYMIND

PREVENTION
UNITED
Joining forces to prevent mental health conditions



Black Dog
Institute



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY
Matilda Centre

The Prevention Coalition in Mental Health Statement on the release of the National Preventive Health Strategy

The Prevention Coalition in Mental Health congratulates the Federal Government on the launch of the National Preventive Health Strategy.

Australia has a highly distinguished track record in the field of prevention. As a nation we've eradicated smallpox, eliminated polio and controlled HIV. We have also reduced the prevalence of cigarette smoking and dramatically reduced the incidence of heart attacks, strokes, certain cancers and road deaths. Over the last two years we've tackled COVID-19 head-on and averted tens of thousands of deaths through the use of an evidence-based, public health response.

The newly released National Preventive Health Strategy enables us to build on these solid foundations and further prioritise and embed a focus on prevention within Australia's health response.

We are particularly pleased to see promoting and protecting mental health and reducing alcohol and other drug harm feature in the new Strategy as focus areas.

It has famously been said there can be no health without mental health. Our mental and physical health are strongly interconnected and influence each other.

Moreover, mental health and physical health conditions share many common risk factors, and they are each a risk factor for the other. Not surprisingly, comorbidity is very common.

Taking an integrated approach to prevention, including through health promotion and mental health promotion, will produce a more sustainable prevention system for the future. It will enable us to tackle shared risk and protective factors, address the powerful interrelationship between our health and mental health, and enable us to simultaneously achieve positive health *and* mental health outcomes across the community.

To achieve this, we will need to strengthen both the mental health and physical health elements of Australia's prevention system.

At present, the leadership and governance, workforce development, research and evaluation, monitoring systems and funding mechanisms are better organised with respect to the prevention of infections and chronic diseases. There are therefore significant gains to be made through further investment in the systems enablers needed to drive prevention efforts to reduce the onset and severity of mental health conditions, and harms from alcohol and other drugs.

Crucially, the commitment to increase the level of funding in preventive health to 5% of total health expenditure across Commonwealth, state and territory governments by 2030 needs to be matched by an equivalent commitment to dedicating 5% of the mental health budget to preventive mental health.

We can no longer afford to leave mental health out of our preventative health and public health initiatives, and the Prevention Coalition in Mental Health therefore looks forward to working closely with Federal, State and Territory governments, the Public Health Association of Australia, and other key stakeholders in making this Strategy a success.