



Media Release Embargoed until 00.01 on 6th May 2011

NACC LAUNCHES NEW INFORMATION TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE DANGERS OF HEAT & DEHYDRATION FOR THE ELDERLY

The National Association of Care Catering (NACC) has today announced the launch of the 'Heat Advice' information booklet, which they hope will help to raise the awareness of the dangers of heat, and the link to poor hydration for the elderly. The new booklet details the information that should be considered as a measure determining risk, and provides carers with details of actions to take to reduce the risks. There is also a checklist for residential and day care settings, and this can easily be adapted for those living at home in the community.

The Heat Advice information focuses on a number of aspects including:

- Heat Stroke
- Heat Exhaustion
- Guidance on the environment an older person is exposed to
- Arming staff with the knowledge to ensure that heat exposure is reduced to a safe level
- Raising awareness of staff with information to assist those in their care.

The NACC is also today calling on all social care and health care professions to be aware of the risks of heat and dehydration to use the 'Heat Advice' and the Dehydration in Older people Awareness Week 6th -12th June as a meaningful measuring tool in all social & health care settings, including hospitals. Hopefully this will lead to improving the overall nutrition and quality of life for older people .

Derek Johnson, NACC Chairman said: "The new booklet is another tool we are using to raise awareness of the health of older people in the UK. When the sun comes out in the UK we tend to relax and enjoy ourselves. This is not the time to forget about the most vulnerable in society, who become over heated and suffer from heat related issues.

"We have focused on older people in the booklet and our Awareness Week, but remember dehydration affects us all and often costs the larger Health Service providers millions of pounds of year to treat. In fact nationally it costs almost 1 billion pounds a year to treat dehydration, and it is preventable simply by drinking more."

This strong economic argument for raising awareness among older people and their carers will also improve their quality of life. Evidence suggests that heat exposure and dehydration among older people can lead to increased hospital stays, increased readmission rates and increased transfer and admission to care homes.

As Rick Wilson, Dietetic Manager at King's College Hospital London, said in September: "Good nutritional care is an investment in independence. Well nourished individuals are more capable of looking after themselves both physically and mentally. Poor nutrition or hydration leads to poor health and a greater need for care. As our population ages and we face the challenges raised by the current public finance situation, it has never been more important to keep older people fit and well... at the cheap end of care!"

Dehydration in Older People Awareness Week is an initiative from the NACC as a result of the publishing of the number of deaths in residential care 667 over a five year period from 2005 - 2009 earlier this year. The week is part of the wider No One Should Go Hungry campaign which is raising the issues regarding malnutrition in the care sector.

A copy of the booklet which will be launched on the 6th May is attached.

Ends

For more information, please contact: Derek Johnson on: 0789 127 1870 chair@thenacc.co.uk

Notes to editors:

The National Association of Care Catering (NACC) is a progressive organisation representing professionals providing catering to the care industry. They are recognised by Local Authorities, independent providers, the charitable sector and Government departments as a prime source of information and opinion on all aspects of catering within the care sector and whose primary aim is to improve standards.

The NACC works with a number of partners to:

- To promote and enrich the standard of catering within the care sector, whether that catering be provided by Social Care Departments or other Caring Agencies
- To provide a forum for debate among individuals, companies and organisations of all kinds involved in catering for the care sector
- To facilitate the exchange of information, experience and expertise
- To promote the development of professional standards among those involved in catering for the care sector
- To commission research into matters relating to catering for the care sector
- To publish guidelines, policy papers and authoritative statements on all aspects of catering for the care sector