World Physical Therapy Day: Physiotherapy vital to supporting an ageing population

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With the rapid ageing of the population, it is important to recognise the vital role that physiotherapists play in supporting older Australians to stay healthy and active says the Australian Physiotherapy Association President Pat Maher.

"Older Australians with chronic diseases such as Type 2 Diabetes, osteoporosis, respiratory and cardiac conditions can be supported to stay out of hospitals and nursing homes by physiotherapists" Mr Maher said.

Physiotherapy for older people is an important way to help people to increase their level of physical activity and to prevent falls – the leading cause of injury admissions to Australia’s hospitals.

People should be doing at least 30 minutes of exercise every day of the week. This is particularly important for older Australians where regular exercise has significant health benefits. Physiotherapists are experts in supporting people to carry out physical activity and can particularly help older people by designing an exercise plan that helps prevent or managing injuries.

Physiotherapists can also help older employees maintain and improve their productivity in the workforce – something that is essential for the economy.

Mr Maher said that “World Physical Therapy Day presents a great opportunity to recognise that physiotherapy is vital to supporting Australia’s ageing population”.

He urged governments at all levels to acknowledge the importance of supporting older people to stay mobile and independent, and to maximise their function.

Mr Maher emphasised the role of government in ensuring that physiotherapy services in the residential aged care sector are adequately funded. He said that this will make sure that all residents can access the physiotherapy they need to maintain their optimal physical function – saving precious health dollars in the long term, as well as making sure that older Australians maintain the self-respect and dignity they deserve.

Contact: Jonathon Kruger 03 9092 0808

www.physiotherapy.asn.au

Background Information:

About the World Confederation for Physical Therapy
The APA is a member of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT). WCPT is the profession’s global body representing over 300,000 physical therapists / physiotherapists from member organisations in 101 countries. For more information go to www.wcpt.org

About World Physical Therapy Day
World Physical Therapy Day falls on 8th September every year, and is an opportunity for physiotherapists from all over the world to raise awareness about their crucial role in keeping people well, mobile and independent. The day was established by WCPT in 1996, and marks the date on which WCPT was founded.