



MEDIA RELEASE

National Diabetes Week 2015 (12–18 July)

Wednesday 15 July 2015

Kellion recipients honoured for a long life with diabetes

A record number of recipients have been awarded *Kellion Victory Medals* for living more than 50 years with diabetes in Melbourne today. Forty four Victorians have qualified for this special honour, which celebrates a long life with diabetes. For the first time in Diabetes Victoria's history, a person with type 2 diabetes has been awarded a *Silver Kellion Victory Medal* (50 years).

"Diabetes is a serious and complex condition," says Diabetes Victoria CEO Craig Bennett. "No one chooses to get diabetes, and no one chooses its complications. *Kellion Victory Medal* recipients are an inspiration to people living with diabetes throughout Australia. We can all learn a lot from their determination and attitude towards living well with diabetes."

Since the early 1980s, over 1500 Australians have been awarded *Kellion Victory Medals*, with over 550 proud Victorians. These medals are named in honour of the late Claude Kellion AM, a businessman who formed a foundation to promote diabetes research after his son died from complications of diabetes.

Less than one hundred years ago, being diagnosed with type 1 diabetes was a death sentence. The introduction of insulin therapy in the early 1920s has been a game changer for living with the condition. "There is no cure yet for type 1 diabetes, but modern innovations have improved life expectancy and quality of life immensely," says Mr Bennett. "It is a remarkable achievement to have lived with diabetes for more than half a century and I congratulate all of our recipients for this outstanding accomplishment. They all deserve our utmost respect and admiration."

Jenni Dyson from Box Hill North is one of the recipients honoured today. Her daughter Shelley saved her mum's life when she was only three years old. Jenni, who was pregnant at the time, became unconscious after having a severe hypo (hypoglycaemia, caused by low blood glucose levels). Her little girl forced juice between Jenni's lips and stayed at her side until help arrived. If left untreated, hypoglycaemia can lead to serious medical problems, including loss of consciousness, convulsions or seizures requiring emergency treatment.

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition in which the body kills insulin-producing cells, whereas type 2 diabetes is a metabolic disorder in which the body either does not produce enough insulin or becomes resistant to the levels it is producing. The body needs insulin to move blood glucose ('sugars') into cells, giving us energy to think, work and play.

For more information:

Lyn Curtis
Sybille Taylor

0411 019 924
0408 102 344

lcurtis@diabetesvic.org.au
staylor@diabetesvic.org.au