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Dear

Subject: Request for Support to Raise Awareness of Coeliac Disease during Coeliac Awareness Week 13-20 March 2024

I am writing to request your support in raising awareness during Coeliac Awareness Week, this 13-20 March 2024.

Coeliac disease is a serious immune-based condition affecting approximately 1 in 70 Australians, yet it remains chronically under diagnosed.

With an estimated 80% of affected individuals unaware of their condition, this means up to 293,600 people are currently experiencing sub-optimal health and are at risk of severe long-term health complications.

The myriad of ways coeliac disease can manifest include:

- Unusual blood test results, such as iron and/or other nutrient deficiencies or altered liver enzymes
- Neurological issues such as brain fog, peripheral neuropathy, ataxia or restless leg syndrome
- Impaired bone health such as low trauma bone fractures, osteopaenia or osteoporosis
- Fertility issues such as loss of menstrual periods, difficulty falling pregnant or recurrent miscarriage
- Unexplained weight loss or failure to thrive in children
- Mood disorders such as depression, anxiety, or behavioural issues in children
- Other chronic unexplained symptoms such as fatigue, joint pain, skin rashes, mouth ulcers, excessive bruising or hair loss



While often perceived as a gastrointestinal condition, gut issues such as abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhoea and constipation are not always present. This is why this year Coeliac Australia is asking Australians to “Think Outside the Gut” and consider whether they may have undiagnosed coeliac disease.

We are seeking your support to allocate resources and funding towards initiatives that will enhance public awareness of coeliac disease during this critical week, and beyond.

Additionally, funding is needed for educational programs targeting healthcare professionals to improve the identification of at-risk individuals and promote timely screening.

It is crucial to raise awareness of the often subtle, but insidious signs and symptoms of coeliac disease, and the importance of early diagnosis. The preventable burden on the health care system cannot be understated, given that early detection and treatment of coeliac disease can prevent most, if not all, related health complications.

The 2024 Coeliac Awareness Week campaign has the following key objectives:

- Create widespread public awareness of the very broad range of signs and symptoms of undiagnosed coeliac disease
- Identify the estimated 80% of affected individuals unaware of their condition
- Encourage Australians to take Coeliac Australia’s free online self-assessment quiz

By supporting Coeliac Awareness Week, you can significantly impact the lives of those affected by coeliac disease. One easy way to support Coeliac Awareness Week is to direct your electorate to Coeliac Australia’s website at coeliac.org.au to learn more about the condition, and take the free [self-assessment quiz](#).

I kindly request your consideration and support for this initiative.

Yours sincerely,

