

# CONSUMER VOICES



News and views on health consumer issues - 17 August 2023



## A win for consumers as 60-day scripts will become a reality

There was an important win for consumers last week, with the go ahead for the new 60-day prescribing rules for some common medicines.

In the past, a cup of tea, a Bex, and a lie-down were go-to remedies when medications were a quick fix for short-term problems. But today's world is different – many people are on one or more daily medications for their long-term health. Traditional 30-day scripts are useful for infections, one-off episodes or when closer monitoring is required.

Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) has long pushed for better access to medicines, and 60-day scripts has been a key element to bringing costs down. Widely embraced, Australians want change, and this will bring about fewer low-value health visits, less chance of missing doses, and lower out of pocket costs, freeing up GP visits for more essential health matters.

Yearly doctor visits and trips to the pharmacy every two months are set to give relief, with a carefully chosen list of medicines taking effect on September 1, 2023, moving towards a modern consumer-focused medicine policy, and bringing Australia into line with other countries.

We acknowledge the advocacy of the many consumers who have been a part of this journey, and our colleagues in other health peaks who share this vision with us.

CHF's CEO, Elizabeth Deveny, alongside AMA President Professor Stephen Robson and RACGP President, Professor Nicole Higgins, held a [joint press conference](#) on August 10, highlighting how this reduces costs for chronic conditions.

CHF launched the ['60dayscripts' website](#) and fact sheets in June to address consumer concerns. We'll be updating the website and provide educational resources for consumers

so they can have informed conversations with their doctors and pharmacists about how and when they can access the 60-day scripts.

As this policy unfolds, CHF remains committed to boosting consumer voices in healthcare policies.

But for now, it's time for a cup of tea to celebrate.

## For young consumer reps and advocates



## Youth Health Forum Masterclasses

The [Youth Health Forum](#), a three year project with the Department of Health, hosted a series of online educational masterclasses for young health consumers early in 2023.

Delivered by experts and co-designed by experienced young health consumers, these masterclasses take you through the skills and knowledge to equip you as young consumer advocates.

Each masterclass incorporates a series of support tools and resources, including a recording of each session which you can now access at any time.

[Access the Masterclasses](#)

## Webinars



## Consumer webinar on the PASC (Long Covid-19) Research Plan

Consumers Health Forum will be co-hosting a webinar for consumers on the MRFF Post-Acute Sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC) Research Plan.

In this webinar, CHF CEO, Elizabeth Deveny who is on the Expert Advisory Committee for the Research Plan and Dr Masha Somi, CEO for the Health and Medical Research Office at the Department of Health and Aged Care will lead the discussion.

**Wed 6 Sept 2.00-4.30pm (AEST)**

Registration details in the next newsletter

About the Research Plan

## Consumer Briefing: National Consumer Engagement Strategy

The Department of Health and Aged Care has released the [Draft National Consumer Engagement Strategy](#) for consultation.

This Strategy will equip policy-makers (those involved in informing, designing and developing policy) and program developers with knowledge, frameworks and skills to engage effectively and purposefully with consumers and communities in the design and development of preventive health policies and programs.

We invite you to take part in this briefing, featuring presentations from several of our member organisations on the Strategy, followed by a panel discussion.

**Mon 21 August, 2:00 pm (AEST), (SA and NT 1:30 pm, WA 12:00 noon)**

Register

## Participate

### Be involved in the co-design of two new national mental health lived experience peak bodies

Collaborate and shape the peaks' role, principles, and structure together.

The Department of Health and Aged Care has engaged The Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI) to guide and facilitate the co-design process, in partnership with people with a lived or living experience with mental health issues.

This will build on previous work and support the Australian Government's commitment to provide \$7.5 million to establish the peak bodies to ensure diverse lived experience voices are central to mental health policy discussions.

Further information on the co-design process and ways you can be involved is available on the TACSI [National Peaks Project Hub](#) and the Department's [website](#).

Read more



## EndGenderBias Survey

Women face unique barriers and gender bias in healthcare. The #EndGenderBias survey is open to consumers and healthcare professionals, and available in 17 languages. Download the information kit or share your experiences by completing the survey today

[Read more](#)



## Have your say on standards for Safe Spaces

Safe Space services are places where people experiencing distress can seek support from peers with lived experience in a non-clinical environment.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) has opened a consultation on the safety and quality priorities for safe spaces.

What makes a safe and high-quality Safe Space?

If you are someone with lived experience of distress or suicidal thoughts or crisis, a family member or carer, you can share your views on safe and high-quality safe spaces before Monday 28 August by:

- Focus group discussion - [register](#)
- A written submission

Lived experience workforce, healthcare professionals and others with an interest in supporting safe spaces are also invited to take part.

[Read more](#)





## Expression of Interest for FECCA Advisory Groups

The Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) has an opportunity to contribute to the strategic policy and advocacy work of Australia's peak body for multicultural communities and help build a stronger, more inclusive multicultural nation where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Please submit your response by 25 August 2023.

Visit the website for more information:

[Read more](#)

## Consumer opportunities

### Committee vacancies

The Department of Health and Aged Care is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced individuals who would like to be considered for **upcoming vacancies on national health technology assessment (HTA) committees and associated subcommittees**. This includes a consumer member position on the Medical Devices and Human Tissue Advisory Committee (MDHTAC).

**Closing date: Sun 3 September.**

[Read more](#)

## Climate and health



## Consumers and the National Health and Climate Strategy

An initiative of the Department of Health and Aged Care, CHF recently [made a submission](#) on the National Health and Climate Strategy. The Strategy's objectives align with the Department's scope and fall into three key areas: mitigating greenhouse emissions within the healthcare system, enhancing its resilience, and empowering communities to combat health repercussions stemming from climate change.

In a joint submission with Health Consumers NSW, Health Consumers Queensland, the Health Issues Centre and the Health Consumers' Council, the consumer peak bodies called for consumer engagement, not only in the consultation phase, but also as a permanent part of the Strategy, and stressed the importance in revisiting the "health in all policies" approach. The submission emphasised that policies impacting access to housing, food, water, and healthcare should be of primary concern as a measure to ensure that the gaps in social inequity do not widen for those who are already at a disadvantage.

This [Croakey article](#) summarises the CHF and Australian Healthcare & Hospitals Association (AHHA) submissions, and a call from Medical Colleges for the Strategy to be fully funded.

[Read more](#)

## National Medicines Symposium

In Australia, health care contributes 7% of our nation's greenhouse gases, with medicines being one of the largest contributors. Pharmaceutical waste throughout the global supply chain has led to environmental, human, and animal toxicities, and in the case of antibiotic residues, to antimicrobial resistance.

Hosted by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) for the first time, the National Medicines Symposium will bring together leading organisations, experts, clinicians, consumers and policymakers in a timely discussion on sustainability and the quality use of medicines.

[Register now](#) for this free virtual event on Wed 8 Nov 2023

[Read more](#)

## Join us



## Consumer representative program

Consumer representatives are nominated for national committees to ensure that the views and interests of health consumers are represented at the national level. CHF supports consumer representatives by providing resources in a number of ways. Find out how to become a [Consumer Rep](#)

## CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

As a member of CHF you will be kept up to date on key health reform issues through our publications and member alerts. CHF membership enables you to influence the national health agenda by contributing to CHF surveys, polls, consultations and campaigns. Members can draw on CHF position statements, media releases and policy submissions to inform your work and advocacy.

[JOIN US - Become a member](#)

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