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CONSUMER VOICES

CHF

Consumers Health Forum of Australia

News and views of health consumers - 14 Feb 2024

CHF advocacy in action

CHF CEO Elizabeth Deveny has been visiting parliamentarians in Canberra during the first sitting week of 2024.

She and Public Affairs Manager Ben Graham met with several MPs to discuss CHF's [Budget Submission](#) which focuses on making healthcare more affordable and accessible.

Watch [Elizabeth's video update here](#)

One of CHF's budget recommendations is for CHF to be funded to develop and run 'Understanding Medicare – Understanding Your Health' community education sessions across Australia.

"Australians need a public health education program which fully explains Medicare and how they can use it to better their health," Elizabeth said. "Medicare funds much more than visits to the GP, it also helps people access the hospital system and pathology amongst other things.

"Medicare turned 40 a couple of weeks ago and it's ready for renewal," she said. "The Australia of 1984 is not the Australia of 2024, and as society and the health needs of Australians have changed, so too must Medicare change to better reflect the needs of today's consumers."

You can read Elizabeth's [full speech at a Deakin University](#) event to mark Medicare's 40th anniversary here.

Consultations



Consumer Roundtable: After Hours Care

Illness and injuries don't keep business hours. Sometimes people need medical help or advice after 6pm or on weekends. After Hours Primary Care helps people when they need medical help outside of business hours, but their situation isn't an emergency.

We are seeking consumers to participate in an online roundtable to gather insights on After Hours Care. The workshops will take place in early March.

Closes: **9:00am (AEDT) Mon 19 Feb 2024.**

[Read more](#)

Frequent Hospital User Workshop

The Department of Health and Aged Care has been running a series of co-design workshops on Wraparound Primary Care for Frequent Hospital Users. The final workshop in this series will be in Melbourne, on 7 March 2024. This workshop will focus on monitoring and evaluation of the program. There is an opportunity for up to five (5) consumers to attend the workshop. Consumers will receive payment for sitting fees and reimbursement for accommodation and travel costs.

Closes: **12:00 midnight (AEDT) Thurs 22nd Feb 2024.**

[Read more](#)

Webinar

The harsh realities of climate change on our health

CHF's first webinar for 2024 will be on Climate Change and Health, and discuss the government's [National Health and Climate Strategy](#). The Strategy was launched by Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ged Kearney, at the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, late last year.

The Strategy sets out a whole-of-government plan to address the health and wellbeing impacts of climate change.

In this webinar we will join a panel of experts to learn more about the government's strategy and the impact of climate change on health and the healthcare system.



[Register here](#)

Other news

PaRIS Survey Report

The PaRIS (Patient Reported Indicator Surveys) is a new international survey designed over time to improve healthcare all over the world.

Twenty countries are participating in the first cycle, including Australia.

The survey provides much needed insights into the outcomes and experiences of primary care as rated by users aged 45 years and older.

A Summary Brief of the preliminary results from the survey has now been released.

[Get the Report](#)



Cosmetic surgery in Australia

The new National Safety and Quality Cosmetic Surgery Standards are here!

Late last year, the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) released the new [National Standards for Cosmetic Surgery](#). These are designed to better protect consumers and ensure that patients receive high-quality care in facilities that are aligned with [new regulations for medical practitioners](#).

Four steps before cosmetic surgery:

- Have an assessment
- Make an informed decision
- Choose your practitioner
- Discuss your post-op care

Consumers participated through focus groups organised by Consumers Health Forum. Share this [infographic about the Standards](#) with your networks.

[See more](#)

In the media



Media roundup

[Medicare turns 40: is Australia's 'little green card' keeping up with changing health needs?](#)

(Natasha May, The Guardian, 1 Feb 2024)

[Competition void leaves specialist patients 'worse off](#)

(Australian Associated Press, 8 Feb 2024)

Inquiry into price gouging and unfair pricing practices

Last week, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) Chair, Professor Allan Fels' released [the Report into unfair pricing](#). The Report cited evidence of overcharging, including out-of-pocket charges by medical specialists.

It also underscored a lack of transparency regarding out-of-pocket costs for patients and the absence of opportunity for consumers to make comparisons between different providers.

CHF CEO, Elizabeth Deveny reiterated that health consumers face challenges in accessing the Medicare services they are entitled to, due to the complexity of the healthcare system.

You can watch Professor Fels' address on the [Inquiry into price gouging](#) at the National Press Club on ABC iView.

Medicare Roundup

Views and media from 40th anniversary Medicare Roundup from [Croakey Health Media](#) by Charles Maskell-Knight.

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