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CONSUMER VOICES

CHF
Consumers Health
Forum of Australia

News and views of health consumers - 29 Feb 2024

CEO update

As consumers continue to feel cost-of-living pressures, including from rising healthcare costs, we are pleased to see growing support of our call to the Australian Government to fund a public education program that explains the Medicare system to the public. Last week, the Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) [added their voice of support](#) behind our *Understanding Medicare – Understanding your health* campaign that would give consumers the health literacy tools to help them save money, navigate the health system and improve their health.

In other news, tomorrow (1 March) we welcome the Australian government's release of the second tranche of 60-day prescriptions of PBS medicines, which include treatments for a range of diseases including endometriosis, cancer, arthritis, Type 2 diabetes and thyroid conditions. The full list of medicines available will be available on the [Department of Health and Aged Care website](#).

CHF will also be updating consumer-friendly fact sheets and FAQs on our dedicated microsite [60dayscripts.com.au](#). We encourage you to share our microsite site within your stakeholder communities.

Lastly, we are saddened by the news that [Health Issues Centre \(HIC\) Victoria](#) will be closing its doors from 7 March. For almost 40 years, HIC has been a tireless advocate for consumer and community engagement in Victoria and a long-standing member organisation of CHF. To the Board, CEO Alison Coughlan and the team at HIC, we thank you for your tireless advocacy in championing consumer engagement in Victoria.

This highlights the continued need for ongoing financial investment at both federal and state levels to ensure long-term sustainability of harnessing the lived and living expertise of consumers in improving our health system. When consumers can advocate for their needs in the health system, we know it results in better service design, delivery and uptake.



Elizabeth Deveny
CEO

Webinars



Climate change and health

Join us for a #CHFTalks webinar on how climate change effects the health of Australians, and government's newly launched [National Health and Climate Strategy](#).

Last week, CHF CEO Elizabeth Deveny met with the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ged Kearney, for a conversation addressing the health and wellbeing impacts of climate change, including preventative approaches to healthcare. In this webinar, we will share the recording of the interview, followed by a panel discussion from experts and healthcare consumers.

When: **1:00 pm - 2:15 pm (AEDT) Mon 07 Mar 2024.**

Register

Consultations

Scope of Practice Specialist webinar and workshop

The Independent [Scope of Practice Review](#), has been initiated by the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care to examine the barriers and incentives health practitioners face working to their full scope of practice in primary care.

Professor Mark Cormack is the independent reviewer leading this review.

In partnership with CHF, Professor Cormack, is providing consumers with an overview of the review. You can join this webinar at 11:00 am on Tues 5th March 2024. The webinar will be available on demand leading to a workshop, where selected consumers will be asked to watch the webinar and then complete a survey.

Further details about the workshop will be available soon.

When: **11:00 am - 12:00 noon (AEDT) Tues 05 Mar 2024.**

Register



Consumer Panel

There is an opportunity for 6 – 10 consumers who have lived experience with Life Support Equipment at Home. Consumers who need certified Life Support Equipment or are the primary carer of someone who does, are invited to join an advisory panel with the Energy Charter.

The [Energy Charter](#) is a CEO-led collaboration of like-minded energy organisations with a shared purpose and passion for customers and communities and includes retailers, distribution

and network businesses in the energy sector.

[Read more](#)

Consumers share their insights on Digital Health

A group of consumer representatives went to Sydney last week to join a meeting convened by the [Australian Digital Health Agency](#).

The [Council for Connected Care](#) provides advice relating to identifying and supporting opportunities to accelerate [interoperability](#) within the different agencies of the health system. Pip Brennan, Mehmet Kavlakoglu, Ricki Spencer, Deidre Ellem and Shu Chen joined a meeting about information sharing with the Council to share their consumer views.



From left: Mehmet Kavlakoglu, Giacomo Romagnoli (CHF), Elizabeth Deveny (CHF), Ricki Spencer, Deidre Ellem, and Shu Chen and Pip Brennan in Sydney on 22 Feb 2024.

Other news

Webinar

How to improve the health of rural, regional and remote communities with an MRFF grant

This webinar from the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) will be a practical workshop about using MRFF funding to improve health in rural, regional and remote areas.

When: **Thurs 14 March 2024 at 11:00am—12:30pm AEDT.**

Please share this link with your networks.

[Register here](#)

Medicine shortages in Australia – Challenges and opportunities

The [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#) (TGA) is seeking input into a consultation about the extent of interruptions to the supply and availability of medicines. The call is for submissions that can address issues and urgency of supply chain disruptions and discontinuations and discuss potential opportunities and solutions. The consultation will help to inform a strategic plan and develop ways to better prevent, manage and communicate shortages.

Consultation closing date extended until 12 March 2024

[Go to the survey](#)

In the media



Media roundup

- ABC Radio Perth Mornings program about specialist referrals – Mon (26 Feb 2024)
- ABC News Radio – GP bulk billing rates – (25 Feb 2024)
- ABC Online – [Falling bulk billing rates](#) – (25 Feb 2024)
- Croakey News – [Statement on Long COVID Inquiry Govt response](#) – (22 Feb 2024)
- SBS Sinhala Explainer – [Huge request to spread awareness regarding Medicare](#) (22 Feb 2024)
- RACGP [CHF calls for Medicare public Education campaign](#) (15 Feb 2024)

Conferences

[Medicare at 40: A Legacy of Excellence and Innovation in Australian Healthcare](#)

Panel discussion: Improving healthcare access and affordability (19 Feb 2024)

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