

Consumers Shaping Health

CHF
Consumers Health
Forum OF Australia



News and views on health consumer issues - August 2022



What science can tell us about the future of health

The value of science was reinforced over the two years of the pandemic as trust spiked and Australians turned to scientists and experts to guide us out of the threat.

We saw accelerated change and rapid adoption of new trends in living, doing work and accessing health care. What have we learned?

The strong message from the latest CSIRO (Australia's National Science Agency) report: [*Our Future World - Global megatrends impacting the way we live over coming decades*](#), published last month, encourages us to call on our leaders, organisations and governments – and each and every one of us – to keep thinking about the reality of future change. .

“Megatrends are trajectories of change that typically unfold over years or decades and have the potential for substantial and transformative impact,” the report tells us.

Adapting to rapidly changing climate conditions, digital transformation and geopolitical shifts are among the seven megatrends identified in the report.

The report also contains insight for those of us thinking about the future health of Australians.

It dramatically details how preventive health has been neglected. Despite high returns on investment, there is too little funding for measures that will make big differences to population health and wellbeing in Australia, advising that “ongoing investment in early detection and prevention is associated with lower economic and mortality costs, and ... is needed improve our future resilience to infectious disease risks.”

A healthier and happier public is less likely to suffer from chronic health conditions.

Federal Treasurer, Jim Chalmers, has forewarned that he will be delivering a sobering Budget in October as we face up to the economic realities of a two-year pandemic. However, the Treasurer has shared his intention to deliver 'Wellbeing Budget' Budgets in the future.

A 'Wellbeing Budget' expands government measures of progress to natural, human, and environmental factors, arguing that financial prosperity alone is not a sufficient measure of quality of life.

A Whitepaper published by [Ending Loneliness Together](#) captures further detail of the health, social and economic cost of loneliness and the importance of this issue. You can [access the Whitepaper here](#).

CHF supports CSIRO in its case for future, long term investments in addressing the social determinants of health, including housing, social supports and education. We have long argued for a national social prescribing scheme.

Social prescribing by primary health care providers to support consumers accessing a range of government and community services will help alleviate many of the conditions that lead to poor physical and mental health.

These conditions are often interconnected, and include homelessness, poverty, social isolation and loneliness, poor nutrition, and family violence or instability.

We [wrote to the Treasurer](#) in advance of the October Budget to set out the issues important to CHF, our members, and health consumers broadly. We said that we welcome the Government's decision to deliver wellbeing Budgets and look forward to opportunities to be part of this vision.

We reinforced the importance of health care reform in this and future Budgets, and applauded commitment of an additional \$1 billion to primary health care as a great start to deliver key reforms to strengthen Medicare.

The CSIRO Megatrends Report tells us that expenditure on healthcare will continue to increase, as our aging population and health care advancements adds to fiscal demands. Strategic thinking must be applied to determine how the taxpayer's health dollar can be most productive.

The seventh and final megatrend – 'Unlocking the Human Dimension' – could be the most important solution in tackling the other rising concerns in Australia's future.

Yet the consumer and community sector – the very avenue that can help unlock human voices and bring them into policy making and better program delivery - has also been squeezed by funding cuts. We reminded the Treasurer that strengthening the community sector and the capacity for peak bodies to consult and advise the Government, is an investment with returns, and with a view to utilising our human potential, we asked for more support to develop consumer leadership skills.

The Minister for Health and Aged Care, Hon Mark Butler, generously met with us last week in a webinar to answer questions from members and consumers about priorities for health in this government's first term. View the [webinar replay here](#). He pledged to work with CHF to lift the capacity for consumer advocacy.

It is with that pledge in my mind and the importance of the CSIRO's message of the 'human dimension' that I bring you this final CEO editorial. I step down from CHF on Friday 12 August after 7 ½ years, buoyed that the future is bright, albeit challenging.

It has been a pleasure to lead CHF and work with so many committed and talented people. Peak bodies such as CHF are nothing if not for our Board, talented staff, committed and engaged members and partners and – importantly – the confidence of our funders.

I look forward to CHF continuing to flourish and have impact.

[REGISTER](#)

Leanne Wells
Chief Executive Officer



NEWS AND UPDATES



Job opportunity: National Coordinator - Youth Health Forum

We have an opportunity for someone to fill a short-term vacancy for the role of **National Coordinator - Youth Health Forum** to the end of February 28 2023.

The Youth Health Forum (YHF) is a network of over a hundred young leaders from across Australia who work together to determine and champion youth perspectives on the current health system.

The Forum was established by CHF to ensure the voice of young health consumers is heard in shaping policy, programs, and services and is funded to March 2023 under a grant from the Department of Health and Aged Care.

YHF are a diverse group of young people and not health policy experts, but experience matters. Members are aged 18 — 30 and use the health and social care system or represent people who do. The views of YHF highlight key areas that will help shape the health of Australians in the future.

[READ MORE](#)



Why be a Director on the CHF Board??

Over the decades, since its establishment and still ongoing, CHF is recognised as the Peak national consumer health organisation in Australia. This is recognised by the Federal Government through funding we receive through the Health Peak and Advisory Bodies funding program, administered through the Department of Health and Aged Care.

As a CHF Director, you will have the opportunity to be a part of a strategic, focussed and collegiate Board. This will include being involved in discussions on strategic priorities based on evidence collected from our various mechanisms and involvement in Thought Leadership Roundtables and Webinars. From time to time there may be opportunities to meet with the Minister and other health-related Ministers, the Secretary and senior officials of the Department of Health and with members, stakeholders and strategic partners.

CHF Directors, Chair Tony Lawson and Deputy Chair, Jo Watson have put together this short article on what being on the CHF Board involves.

[READ MORE](#)



Australian Government
Australian Digital Health Agency



Free digital skills program **Your health is in your hands** - a practical

Your Health is in Your Hands is a new national digital health program to give Australians practical skills to manage their wellbeing

Want to learn how to book doctors appointments online, see your immunisation and health records, or decide who can access your online health information?

Discover how using secure and reliable online services can make managing your health and wellbeing easier by joining a free **Your Health is in Your Hands** support session.

Delivered by Good Things Foundation Australia in partnership with the Australian Digital Health Agency, **Your Health in Your Hands** program provides practical digital health skills support for free to anyone in Australia through webinar sessions, virtual group support sessions and, in selected areas, in-person support.

Support sessions cover a wide range of topics, including:

- Accessing online mental health support
- My Health Record and your privacy
- Digital health tips for carers
- ...and more!

More about [Your Health is in Your Hands](#)

The full line-up of [webinars is available here](#).

[READ MORE](#)



From the TGA

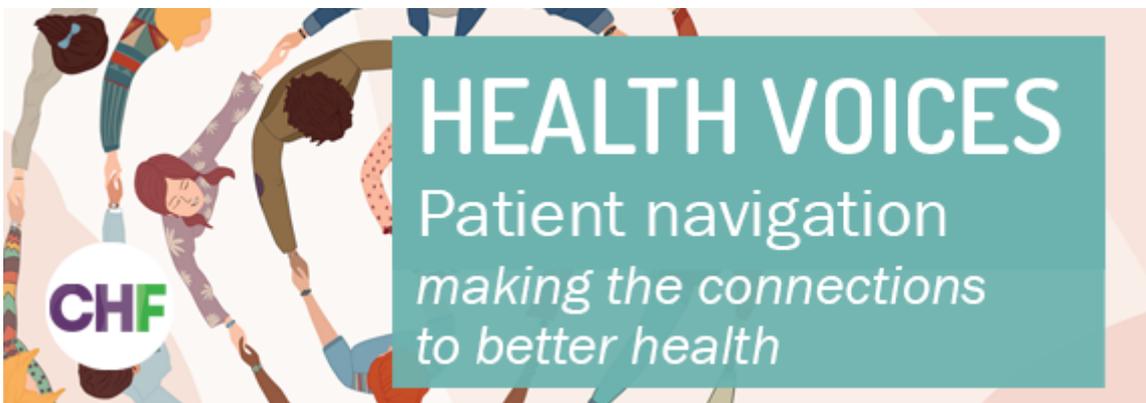
The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) have released a new [Business Plan 2022-23](#). The plan sets out product regulation, stakeholder engagement, regulatory compliance and innovation agenda for 2022-23 and lists the activities they will undertake to achieve these objectives.

The plan has been developed using three key principles of regulator best practice:

- Continuous improvement and building trust
- Risk based and data driven
- Collaboration and engagement.

The principles were the platform for developing the strategic objectives and performance indicators outlined in the plan. The TGA hopes you find the plan informative and a reflection of the TGA's commitment to their stakeholders.

[READ MORE](#)



Health care - can you find it?

Health Voices: patient navigation - making the connections to better health

The role of navigators to help health consumers access different aspects of medical and social care, and treatment – and other ways to support consumers and carers – is becoming essential in Australia's complex and fragmented health care system.

[READ MORE](#)

Have Your Say: Child Dental Benefits Schedule



Have your say - Child Dental Benefits Schedule

The Child Dental Benefits Schedule (CDBS) provides eligible children with up to \$1026 in basic dental cover over two consecutive calendar years. As of 30 June 2022, nearly 3.2 million Australian children have received more than \$2.6 billion in benefits and around 42.7 million services.

The CDBS is being reviewed to find out how the program can improve. We encourage recipients and providers of the CDBS to share their experiences. You can do so by visiting the Consultation: Child Dental Benefits Schedule webpage and completing the survey.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

WEBINAR REPLAY

**Webinar for health
consumers and
consumer advocates**

HON MARK BUTLER MP
**MINISTER FOR HEALTH
AND AGED CARE**



Meet with the Minister

The Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon. Mark Butler MP, joined us last week to discuss future plans for health in this webinar for consumers, members and stakeholders.

Members and consumers were invited to propose questions to prompt the discussion on the Minister's priorities for health and the big issues that we hope to see progressed in the first term of the Labor Government.

We chose a spectrum of submitted questions and invited guests to put them directly live to the Minister – ABC "Q&A" style.

The webinar was recorded on 5 August 2022.

[WATCH THE REPLAY](#)



Talking about mental health gets easier – new survey results of young Australians

NPS MedicineWise has recently released survey results about young Australians with mental health issues. Almost half (47%) were uncomfortable speaking to their doctor about it when first diagnosed. This got easier over time. Around 4 in 10 (43%) had used a mental health safety plan. This is something that can lower the risk of suicide by almost half.

The survey was conducted from 25-29 June 2022 and 309 Australians between the ages of 16 and 24 diagnosed with a mental health condition took part. The people were representative of young people with a mental health condition.

NPS MedicineWise has created a [series of videos](#) where young people share their stories. They talk about overcoming stigma, building relationships with health professionals and navigating the health system.

A mental health safety plan is an important part of mental health treatment. A safety plan can lower the risk of suicide by almost half.

Around four in ten (43%) of young people with a mental health condition use a mental health safety plan.

There are 7 steps to the Beyond Now mental health safety plan:

- Recognising your warning signs
- Making your surroundings safe
- Reminders of reasons to live
- Things that can make you feel strong
- People and places to connect with
- Family and friends you can talk to
- Professional support

The Beyond Now app from Beyond Blue can be used as a mental health safety plan. It is on your phone and it is always there when you need it.

For more - Read the [media release](#) and [summary of the survey results](#) .

[READ MORE](#)



Australia's Health Panel



What can you tell us about communication in healthcare?

Communication between doctors, nurses and other providers is so important to better health outcomes and patient experience, as we discussed in this webinar "[Communication in health care](#)" co-hosted with the ANU Institute for Communication in Health Care.

For the July 2022 Australia's Health Panel survey, we want to know more about your experiences with communication in health care settings.

Help us identify how health providers currently communicate with patients and what improvements can be recommended.

Please [share this survey](#) with your family and friends.

Australia's Health Panel is an interactive online platform devoted to harnessing the views of Australians about the state of the nation's health care system.

Find out more about what you said - on [self-financed health care](#), [Medicare](#), and [private health](#) - [See the results](#) or [Join the Panel](#)

AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH PANEL

Get involved



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

Special Interest Groups

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are a way for members and the broader consumer community to be involved in our advocacy work and in shaping policy.

Special Interest Groups to focus on Primary Health Care, Research & Data, Digital Health, Safety & Quality and Rural & Remote. SIGs help us to features even more consumer insight and perspective reflective of our Australian community. Find out more about CHF [Special Interest Groups](#).

Opportunities to join SIGs are advertised in newsletters and on our website.

FIND OUT ABOUT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS



Media releases and editorial

[Why be a Director on the CHF Board?](#)

What a good question! The Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd (CHF) is the national voice for health consumers. In 1988 when CHF was first established with government funding The Hon Neal Blewett, Minister for Community Services and Health, in a speech to CHF said – “Without informed ... 4 Aug 2022 — Blog

[Welcome to the new AMA President, Professor Steve Robson](#)

We welcome the announcement from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) that Professor Steve Robson has been elected as the Association’s new President. CHF CEO Leanne Wells said that Professor Robson, a senior specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Canberra, has... 1 Aug 2022 — Media release

[CHF adds consumer voice to strengthening Medicare](#)

CHF welcomes the Albanese Government’s commitment to strengthening Medicare and the establishment of a Taskforce to listen to voices across the health sector and in the community to improve primary health services. The Taskforce meets for the first time in... 29 Jul 2022 — Media release

[COVID response a timely intervention to bring case numbers down](#)

CHF welcomes the reinstatement of the COVID-19 Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment, expedited by the decision of National Cabinet at an emergency meeting on Saturday. The wave of COVID-19 cases is reaching worrying numbers and medical experts are estimating a new peak in... 18 Jul 2022 — Media release

[Vital supports are necessary as COVID cases soar](#)

Consumers Health Forum of Australia is urging all political leaders and the Federal Government to respond to calls for COVID emergency measures to be continued over winter. The CHF CEO, Leanne Wells said that while these supports were temporary, the surge in COVID cases is cause for extending ... 15 Jul 2022 — Media release

READ ALL MEDIA RELEASES & OPINION

CHF*Talks* webinar series



Webinar replays

- Automated decision making and AI in health — [watch the replay](#)
- The role of health communication in health care — [watch the replay](#)
- Primary Health Reform Leaders Summit — [view more](#)
- What does the election mean for health? — [watch the replay](#)
- The Voice of Australian Health Consumers — [watch the replay](#)
- Consumer Assessors: improving healthcare and service outcomes — [watch the replay](#)

CHF YouTube channel

Resources and Information

Turn to the website of the [Department of Health](#) to find the most recent, verified information, posted daily.

Use [Healthdirect Australia](#), the Australian Government Health advice portal for consumers, for [information on COVID-19](#), the [symptom checker](#) and helpline: 1800 022 222.

Healthdirect provides free, approved medical advice and has delivered information to Australians on COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic. Tools and information on COVID-19 can be accessed from the [COVID-19 section](#) of the Healthdirect website.

NPS MedicineWise

A new [information hub from NPS MedicineWise](#) will help you be medicine wise

Be Health Aware - [CHF portal for health resources](#)

The [Australian Commission of Safety and Quality](#) has published a [FAQ page](#) on the **safe use of masks** for consumers and a [factsheet you can download](#).

Become a member

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 and 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](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

[Consumers Health Forum](#)

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