

# Consumers Shaping Health



## *News and views on health consumer issues - April 2019*

### **Budget 2019: Health Priorities for Australia**

As the commentators have remarked, the Federal Budget timing is unusual, being so close to a federal election. It raises speculation that a prime aim is short term to attract votes at next month's poll.

Certainly the health budget is packed with a myriad of new measures ranging from an end to the Medicare freeze, more MRIs, new adult walk-in mental health centres and more for life-saving drugs for rare diseases, to name just a few.

One measure we have particularly welcomed however lays the foundation for long term, significant development of 21st Century health care. It is the new primary care/chronic care funding of \$448.5 million to improve access for people aged over 70 by enabling them to enter agreements for more supportive integrated care with their GP.

The changes are directed at encouraging continuity of care for those with chronic conditions and will remove the Medicare barrier to payment for patient contacts that are not face-to-face.

They will mean that instead of having to go to the surgery for script repeats, test results and the like, patients will be able to organize via phone or email.

This initiative is an important step forward for health care in Australia because of the hoped-for stimulus it will bring to general practice for GPs and other clinicians to step outside boundaries of traditional face-to-face care and make the most of modern communications technology for the benefit of patients.

For many older people the journey to the GP can be a challenge --- one trip too many --- so that it becomes easy to let slip the need to collect a script or check on a test. While there are many GPs who will communicate with patients outside the surgery but not charge, there is a strong argument for providing an incentive to them and their practice for the time and attention spent outside the bounds of Medicare payment rules.

It also opens the way towards more consumer-centred health care where the individual's life and needs receive more focus. More flexible payments will equip general practices to more easily deliver team-based care involving health professionals like pharmacists and exercise physiologists working with the GP and open up more scope for consumer education and self-management.

We would have liked to see the innovation extended to children under five, given the time pressures facing busy parents with young children, for whom a trip to the doctor can be something of an ordeal.

And whichever party wins the election, the Consumers Health Forum will be pressing for this primary health development to become the genesis for a community-wide primary health system that reflects contemporary realities.

**Leanne Wells**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



### **Best of health for Australia: The experts' priorities for the 2019 Federal Election**

From palliative care and consumer education to childhood obesity and creating a new health system for the new generation, the expert panel at our event last month covered a range of topics that needed to be addressed by the next government. The panel included Karen Carey, former Chair of CHF, Stephen Duckett, Head of the Health Program at Grattan Institute and Sandro Demaio from ABC's Ask the Doctor.

[Watch the event](#)

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### **The upsides and downsides of Budget 2019**

Leanne Wells discusses the pros and cons of Budget 2019 for health consumers in this short video.

[Watch the video](#)

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### **Healthy Cover: a consumers' guide to the PHI changes**

On 1 April 2019, private health insurance began the most extensive changes in recent years. CHF's Healthy Cover guide provides an easy-to-understand overview of the changes and points to more detailed information that will help you work through the changes to assess what best suits them.

[Read Healthy Cover](#)

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## Influenza prevention and treatment podcast

Professor Dominic Dwyer speaks to Dhineli Perera on the latest influenza fighting tools in this Australian Prescriber podcast episode.

[Watch the podcast](#)

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## Breast implants: things to consider before having the procedure

People may get breast implants for many reasons, including cosmetic enhancement and reconstruction after surgery. Breast implants differ in their size, shape, filling and texture. They may be filled with saline (sterile salt water) or with silicone gel. The surface of the implant may be smooth or textured. Breast implants are not lifetime devices and need to be replaced after 10 to 15 years.

If you are considering breast implants [Click Here](#) to learn more about things you should know before undergoing the procedure.

## Events



### Webinar on Budget 2019

Join us to hear CHF's analysis of the 2019 Budget and its implications for health consumers.

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### Workshop 2: Bedside to boardroom

Consumers are invited to attend a free session at the 2nd Australasian Diagnostic Error in Medicine Conference on **Sunday 28 April 2019 in Melbourne**. The interactive session entitled 'Workshop 2: Bedside to boardroom: the roles patients and communities can play in supporting diagnostic excellence' will be led by patients and consumers of healthcare services who are passionate about diagnostic excellence, and elevating the role of patients and consumers in reducing the instance and impact of diagnostic error.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)



## International Tracheostomy Symposium (ITS)

The Organising Committee of the 5th International Tracheostomy Symposium (ITS) is pleased to invite you to participate in this exciting event on **Friday 11 October in Melbourne**. The International Tracheostomy Symposium (ITS) is increasingly recognised as the premier event for tracheostomy specialists, doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, patients and families to grow and learn together.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)



## Preventing Overdiagnosis 2019

The December conference in Sydney Australia will include a number of lively plenary debates about controversial and timely issues, involving high-profile players from across the healthcare landscape. There will be parallel and panel sessions covering themes such as Genomics and Commercial Determinants of Health and Overdiagnosis and the Media.

**Date: 5 - 7 December 2019**

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## Consultations and Surveys

### Research of a patient-centered alternate funding model for General Practice

The current way GPs are funded encourages short consultations. However, taking a person-centred approach takes time. Some GP researchers would like to understand what is important to consumers and what trade-offs are they willing to make. This online, anonymous survey will ask you to choose which GP clinic you would prefer to attend in terms of the nature of the practice and the time/quality of the service. The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes.

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)

### Monash University Survey on Expectations in Healthcare Testing

Monash University Survey on Expectations in Healthcare Testing Monash University are currently undertaking a sociological study which aims to 'understand the sociocultural processes underpinning optimism for the use of testing technologies in healthcare'. As part of this project, Monash University are currently seeking volunteers to participate in a short (approx. 5 minutes) online survey, with the option to participate in a follow up interview (approx. 40 to 60 minutes) on their experience with healthcare testing and screening in Australia. Closing date: Monday 15 April 2019.

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)

## Media Releases

[Enrolling for better health care](#)

[Improved access to scripts: vital to better health](#)

[Best of Health for Australia, the experts' priorities for the 2019 Federal Election](#)

[Freeze on Medicare rebates for scans coming to an end](#)

[Dental care: filling the gap](#)

[Greens reveal welcome plan to put more money where our mouth is](#)

[Specialist fees website aimed to end bill shock](#)

## Blogs



### Gold, silver bronze: making health insurance easier to navigate

For consumers who already have health insurance and for those contemplating a policy, it is important they assure themselves they are getting the most out of their health insurance arrangements.

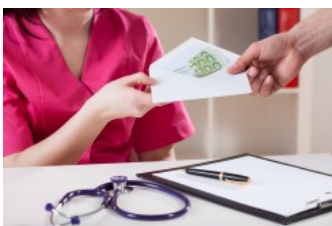
[Read more](#)



### The current medico-political and policy landscape: some expert insights

Recently the Consumers Health Forum held a member and stakeholder forum to hear emerging and policy themes in the political arena concerning the social determinants of health.

[Read more](#)



### Modest step in response to egregious specialist fees

The announcement of Federal Government plans to establish a website listing medical specialist fees may seem a modest response to a problem that causes financial distress to many patients already struggling with their physical pain.

[Read more](#)

## Benefits of Becoming a CHF 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.

[Find out more about membership here.](#)

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