



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



### ***Consumers and pharmacists need to share a healthy future***

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia recently held its 2019 annual conference on the theme Pharmacists in 2023. The years ahead for professional pharmacists are crucial for them, and of course for consumers given the regular visits many people make to the local pharmacy.

And if healthcare changes give pharmacists a greater role and more service, as we have advocated, consumers and pharmacies will be seeing each other more by 2023.

A comprehensive report by the PSA, also titled Pharmacists in 2023, has laid out a blueprint for a greater role and accountability for pharmacists in aspects including medicines management and primary care. That's an ambition we strongly support.

As I told the conference, consumers want pharmacy to be a healthcare destination and want to see pharmacists as clinicians who are part of their regular care team. That means pharmacists working in settings outside of the retail setting. It means community pharmacy working in different ways of outreach, to support correct medication for the chronically ill who are house bound and for residents in aged care nursing homes.

It also means new ways of funding enhanced roles. We should be thinking of including Medicare items for pharmacy as well as other specific-purpose payments beyond the

community pharmacy agreement. The Community Pharmacy Agreement is not a panacea but money there should also be spent wisely on roles and functions that pharmacists can do which add value to care.

As I also told the conference, we need collaboration not competition between pharmacists and GPs. We need a culture of collaborative practice that is fostered right from the beginning where undergraduate education should teach interprofessional collaborative practice.

It is timely that we broaden thinking about the roles that can be served by pharmacists – in the context of primary care, aged care and mental health reforms and in the direction set out in the pharmacy profession’s vision for itself in Pharmacists in 2023. It is in the consumers’ interests.

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

## ***News and Resources***

### ***The Australian Ethical Health Alliance (AEHA)***

The new Australian Ethical Health Alliance (AEHA) has come into being amid a growing consciousness in health circles about just how important a consideration ethics is.

A recent case in point is community concerns about the ethics of “egregious” fees charged by some doctors. Australia’s Chief Medical Officer, Brendan Murphy, is going to investigate whether doctors who charge unnecessarily high fees that leave patients and their families in severe financial pain, should be penalised. Professor Murphy will determine whether there is a threshold at which billing becomes so unethical it should be considered malpractice.

CHF CEO, Leanne Wells, says health costs and safety and quality in health care are among the issues that the new alliance will consider. The Consumers Health Forum is a member of the Leadership Group that has established the Australian Ethical Health Alliance (AEHA). The AEHA was formed to promote the [Australian Consensus Framework for Ethical Collaboration in the Healthcare Sector](#) (ACF) as a way to facilitate ethical behaviour at the organisational level, provide general guidance to organisations and encourage and monitor reporting of activities directly related to the principles outlined in the ACF.

Despite its high quality and integrity, the Australian healthcare system faces several persisting and newly emerging challenges. Healthcare delivery has been significantly impacted by the complex nature of funding and delivery of healthcare between the public and private sector, the ongoing inequitable access to healthcare experienced by different communities and the increasing costs of care and out-of-pocket healthcare expenses experienced by patients and their families.

The principles outlined in the ACF aim to promote collaboration among healthcare sector organisations and those who work within them, encourage dialogue, trust and respect between and amongst organisations in the healthcare sector, enhance the integrity and trustworthiness of organisations in the healthcare sector and promote public confidence and trust in healthcare sector organisations by demonstrating a shared commitment to integrity and ethics.

Membership of the newly formed AEHA Steering Committee is representative of a wide variety of organisations across the sector such as educators, nursing, allied health and other health professionals. **Adrian Cosenza**, CEO of the Australian Orthopaedic Association is the Chair of the AEHA Steering Committee. Other members are:

- **Alison Verhoeven**, Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association
- **Deborah Monk**, Medicines Australia
- **Jane Fitzpatrick**, Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians
- **Leanne Wells**, Consumers Health Forum of Australia
- **Tracey Duffy**, Department of Health
- **Ian Burgess**, Medical Technology Association of Australia
- **Ian Kerridge**, Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- **Wendy Lipworth**, Praxis Australia
- **Peter Subramaniam**, Australian & New Zealand Society for Vascular Surgery
- **Mary Warner**, Department of Health
- **Carolyn Stapleton**, Australian College of Nursing
- **Chris Ho**, Skin Cancer College
- **Rachel Yates**, Universities Australia.



### ***TGA Breast Implant Hub***

This hub aims to provide information to consumers and support related to breast implants and are interested in consumer feedback on the relevance, accuracy and accessibility of the hub. If you are interested in providing feedback, please email it to CHF's Research and Policy Officer James Ansell at [j.ansell@chf.org.au](mailto:j.ansell@chf.org.au)

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### ***Be Medicinewise Week 2019***

The ninth annual Be Medicinewise Week (**19 - 25 August**) is encouraging Australians to get to know the language of medicines. Understanding and communicating about medicines is key to getting the most out of them, safely.

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### ***Informed financial consent guide***

The AMA has released a new guide to empower patients with important information to help them understand medical costs, and give them confidence to discuss and question fees with their doctors.

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### ***Improved medicines information***

The Australian Government is introducing an improved format for the documents – called Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) – that doctors and pharmacists give to patients to inform them about the safe and effective use of prescription medicines and certain over-the-counter medicines.

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### ***Rural health workforce: The real story***

Over the next 5 weeks the National Rural Health Alliance will be releasing series of health workforce fact sheets that show the number of health professionals working in rural, regional and remote areas per capita compared to major cities.

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### ***Royal Commission into Aged Care - tell your story in your own language***

Do you have lived experience with aged care? You can now contribute your stories to the Royal Commission in your own language. The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils in Australia (FECCA) has developed a toolkit to help people from multicultural backgrounds to share their experiences.

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### ***Consultations and Surveys***



### ***Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety***

CHF is preparing a submission to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and we want to include your views and lived experience front and centre of our response. We have developed a survey with questions relating to different sections of the Terms of Reference. If you have any questions please contact our Safety and Quality Policy Officer, Leanne Kelly at [l.kelly@chf.org.au](mailto:l.kelly@chf.org.au)  
**Closing: Sunday 18 August 2019**

**COMPLETE SURVEY**

### ***Events***

**Hosted by  
health advocate  
Luke Escombe**  
**#MyHealthcareRights**

**The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights**

**LIVE WEBCAST 8 AUGUST**

## Charter of Healthcare Rights - Online Launch

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care is pleased to invite you to the online launch of the second edition of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights which will be live-streamed across Australia on **8 August 2019, commencing at 13:00 (AEST)**. Luke Escombe, award-winning singer-songwriter, comedian and health advocate will be hosting the event and will be joined by a range of speakers from the world of health.

The Charter describes what you, or someone you care for, can expect when receiving healthcare. The Charter applies to all people in all places where healthcare is provided in Australia.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## Speech Pathology Australia - Review of SPA's Code of Ethics

Speech Pathology Australia is seeking the consumer perspective to assist the review of their Code of Ethics. Speech Pathology Australia is seeking consumer participation in a 90 minute focus group to be held via videoconference in August. The meeting date has yet to be confirmed but is anticipated to be either 19 August or 29 August, depending on availability of stakeholders.

The discussion topics for the focus group will include trends and themes in the provision of ethical professional allied health services identified in consultation to date.

To register your interest to attend, please contact Trish Johnson, Manager Ethics and Professional Issues at Speech Pathology Australia via email at [tjohnson@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](mailto:tjohnson@speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

**Registrations close COB on Wednesday 14 August 2019**

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## CHF Media Releases and Blogs

### Private health insurance – more questions than answers

A new report which finds Australia's health system is "increasingly unfair, costly and confusing", must spur the Federal Government to establish a wide-ranging inquiry into private health insurance and its role in the funding and delivery of healthcare.

### Health fund failures warrant review

A report that health insurance funds have failed to meet regulated requirements concerning their coverage obligations is disturbing and warrants a review by the Government into the handling of pre-existing condition disputes.

### My Health Record: what now?

Like any big change to behaviour in a system as complex as healthcare, the introduction of My Health Record (MHR) while offering great benefits, continues to pose complex challenges for all of us: consumers and clinicians alike.

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### **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 OUR MEMBERSHIP HERE](#)

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