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Consumers Shaping Health



News and views on health consumer issues

February 2019

We are shifting up a gear

At the end of last year we released our white paper, [Shifting Gears: Consumers Transforming Health](#) and it is proving to be a great platform from which to mount some key activities we have planned for 2019.

Shifting Gears sets out eight key shifts we need to see in health policy and services if we are to achieve consumer-centred care that promotes the best of modern health care, and prescribes an ambitious agenda for equipping consumers to be informed and empowered.

Already this year we are launching and engaging in several projects as CHF shifts up a gear in promoting the role of consumers in health advocacy. And we are also stepping up the tempo of Consumers Shaping Health, bringing our latest news and views to you in an edition every month - and with a fresh masthead.

Our new health literacy hub [#BeHealthAware](#) launched on our website this week provides a fresh entry point via a portal to major information sites on a wide range of health topics that consumers may need to consult.

[#BeHealthAware](#) is a one-stop knowledge source providing information from authoritative and knowledgeable sources to guide consumers through the health care maze.

In other steps, we are finalising the results of a Consumer Sentiment Survey. Its aim was to examine policy issues and practice with an emphasis on how consumers can engage in the health system.

The survey has yielded significant insights. While showing that most people are happy with their health care, a significant number expressed uncertainty about accessing the right services and more than half of respondents said the government should be spending more on health. We will be publishing the full results in the near future.

In the coming months CHF will be conducting a National Patient Activation Survey to provide insights into the attitudes and behaviours of people with one or more chronic conditions. The responses will help design measures to better support patient health literacy and self-management.

All of these activities advance our message of consumer engagement and influence in health care and policy.

Our long terms efforts to expand and enhance primary care have received a boost from the Federal Government with the additional \$500 million in funding to strengthen and reform primary care including the Health Care Homes initiative, announced in the MYEFO economic statement unveiled late last year.

We support these steps as hints of a move away from the hospital-centric orthodoxy by supporting integrated care in the community of people with chronic and complex

conditions.

As Health Minister, Greg Hunt, has said: "The most successful hospital visit is the one that never happens."

However we have urged the Government to make a change in its health funding policy in the forthcoming federal budget.

This robbing Peter to pay Paul approach in health budgeting, overlooks the reality that many areas require more expenditure: primary health care, mental health and aged care to name just three.

Leanne Wells

Chief Executive Officer

News and Resources



#BeHealthAware

#BeHealthAware is a portal to evidence-based information and resources that act as a guide to the health care choices we need to make, whether in relation to a particular disease, treatment, service or policy.

CHF has developed #BeHealthAware as part of our advocacy of health literacy as a central element of consumer-centred health care. Evidence shows best health outcomes significantly rely on an informed and engaged patient and consumer.

[Visit #BeHealthAware](#)



Life Checks

Did you know the average Australian life expectancy is now 82.5 years? Life Checks, the new Australian Government campaign, aims to help more than 10 million Australians aged 45+ on how to prepare for the next stages in their lives.

[Take your free online Life Check](#)



Life support devices and electricity

From 1 February 2019, new rules will commence to strengthen the protections for customers who rely on life support equipment. These new rules are designed to allocate clear responsibilities between retailers and distributors to ensure the life support registers are accurate and up-to-date.

If you or someone in your home has life support equipment, or have been told by your doctor that you need it, you must tell your energy supplier, even if you have done so previously.

[Click here to learn more about the Life Support Registration Guide](#)



High cost medicines

When you visit your local pharmacy you may find they do not have stock of the medicine you require. This may be because the medicine is specialised or expensive for the pharmacy to order. These products are often ordered on demand rather than routinely stocked.

In order to ensure you are not caught out, it is a good idea to:

- Order in advance – pharmacies are usually able to source medicines with 24-48 hours, so it's best to order before you run out. It is important to note that the pharmacy must have a copy of your prescription before they can order.
- Leave your prescription on file at your local pharmacy – This means the pharmacy knows when you next require your prescription to be filled and can make sure they order accordingly.



Anxiety – rethinking the options: new NPS MedicineWise program

The new educational program from NPS MedicineWise focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of anxiety disorders – conditions that often remain undiagnosed for many years but for which effective treatments are available.

Anxiety disorders, including panic disorder, agoraphobia, social anxiety disorder and generalised anxiety disorder, are the most common mental health conditions in Australia, affecting 2.3 million people aged 16–85 years. On average, it takes 8.2 years for a person with an anxiety or mood disorder to seek help.

[Learn more about the program](#)

Medicine Safety



Medicine Safety - Take Care report

PSA's Medicine Safety: Take Care report details the extent of harms in Australia as a result of medicine use.

The report reveals that 250,000 Australians are hospitalised each year, with another 400,000 presenting to emergency departments, as a result of medication errors, inappropriate use, misadventure and interactions. At least half of this could have been prevented.

[Read the Medicine Safety report](#)

From the Policy Team

Consumer Medicines Information Leaflets

A survey conducted by CHF has revealed that more action is needed to improve the way people get their information about their medicines.

The Federal Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, has raised the issue of how consumers can better access information about the medicines they take. He asked the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to work with all key stakeholders to look at how the Consumer Medicines Information leaflets (CMIs) can be improved to make them more consumer friendly.

[Read More](#)

Events

PREVENTING OVERDIAGNOSIS
5-7 December 2019 SYDNEY

ABSTRACTS / REGISTRATION OPEN

7TH INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON PREVENTING OVERDIAGNOSIS

Keynotes

BMJ Editor-in-chief, Dr Fiona Godlee	Menzies Centre for Health Policy, Professor Adam Etshaug
US National Cancer Institute, Dr Barry Kramer	Hong Kong Branch of the Chinese Cochrane Centre, Professor Jin-ling Tang

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.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)

Consultations and Surveys

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 Monash University survey.](#)

NPS MedicineWise: Opioids Therapeutic Program Survey

NPS MedicineWise have started work on their next therapeutic program, Opioids, which they are intending to launch in August/September 2019. NPS MedicineWise are currently undertaking formative research and environmental scanning in this area, ahead of the planning and design of the program.

NPS MedicineWise are interested in your input on the focus of the program, which other stakeholders should be involved, and how they should involve them. If you would like to provide feedback, you can complete this survey or to find out more information contact Bronwyn Walker on 02 8217 8784 or Bronwyn.Walker@nps.org.au. Closing date: 19 February 2019.

[Take the NPS MedicineWise survey.](#)

Cancer Council: Consultation for Proposed Standard for Financial Consent

The Cancer Council Australia, Breast Cancer Network Australia, Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia and CanTeen have proposed a [standard for financial consent](#) which is currently open for public consultation. The standard will aim to support doctors and practices to engage in activities that enable greater transparency around fees charged to enable patients to better consider the likely financial impact to them. Closing date: 15 February 2019.

[Take the Cancer Council survey.](#)

Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights - draft second edition

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (the Commission) is inviting your feedback on the draft second edition of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.

The Charter describes the rights of all people accessing healthcare. It applies in all healthcare settings in Australia including public and private hospitals, general practice, day procedure services, dental and other community settings. Closing date: 1 March 2019.

[View the draft Charter and complete the survey.](#)

Media Releases

[My Health Record enshrines choice](#)

[Healthier budgets can pay economic dividends](#)

Blogs



Making our health system better for all

A new [Report on Government Services](#) indicates that Australia's publicly-funded health services are performing passably well in meeting demand - but could do better. It provides yet more evidence highlighting the need for changes in primary health care that the Consumers Health Forum have been calling for in recent years.

[Read More](#)



Ten reform to-dos for a healthier 2019

Here we are in 2019, well into the 21st century and the new millennium. As the years slip by and our knowledge about what works best in health care continues to expand, the question arises: are we best using what we know to improve our lives?

[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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