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News and views on health consumer issues

Health priorities in focus at the National Press Club

The approach of the Federal election provides an important opportunity to explore the fundamental questions facing our health system. The latest Essential Poll found that Australians named two priorities – improving the health system and reducing utility bills – as the most important issues for the Federal Government to address.

(Right: Leanne Wells addressing the Australian Financial Review Healthcare Summit in Sydney)



What better forum to examine our national health priorities than at the National Press Club? On Friday 22 March the Consumers Health Forum and The George Institute for Global Health present a Best of Health for Australia panel debate on election health priorities featuring three leading experts: Karen Carey, Professor Stephen Duckett and Dr Sandro Demaio. [You can book here.](#)

These speakers are all ideally placed to give varying perspectives on crunch issues for health in Australia, including prevention, First Nations health, primary care and the fragmented health system.

Consumers are playing an ever-expanding role in their own health care and in designing better health systems. It was a repeated theme at the Australian Financial Review Healthcare Summit in Sydney which I chaired recently.

We are well into the 21st century and consumers and the community need to be asking whether health care in Australia is delivering on the potential offered by modern medical knowledge, health system research and consumer experience.

If we are to drive more responsive, personalised and convenient services and technologies to sustain the health outcomes we expect and deserve, as well as propel our system forward to meet achievable outcomes, our challenge is to both innovate and improve – and to do so with insight from consumers.

And that requires CHANGE.

Recently the Consumers Health Forum identified ten reform priorities in health care. These include a much stronger national preventative health program, shifting our focus from hospital to much more integrated care in community care and supporting stronger, more effective consumer involvement.

Our recent white paper, [Shifting Gears – Consumers Transforming Health](#) concluded that changes to health care are going to accelerate at an unprecedented pace, driven

by digitalisation, consumer expectation and advances including genomics and precision, personalised medicine.

We need a change in thinking by many of our political and government leaders if Australia's health care is to reflect and capitalise on the potential of 21st Century health care.

Leanne Wells

Chief Executive Officer

News and Resources



Youth Health Forum visit to Parliament House

In February 2019, four members of CHF's Youth Health Forum visited Parliament House to raise the key issues for youth health with politicians and staff. The focus of discussions was the missing voice of youth health in policy and service design consultations. CHF put forward a proposal for an ongoing Youth Health Program to ensure this important group are supported and given opportunities to contribute to health discussions at a national level. An ongoing Program supported by CHF would include opportunities for leadership training, professional development, and input to our Youth Health Strategy.

From left to right - Members of the Forum: Kathleen Wedderburn, Georgia Gardner, Shalon Hunte and Arun Bharatula.



Conversations for Change: Choosing Wisely Australia Report

GPs, specialists and hospital staff cite challenges in accessing patient information from other clinicians as a common reason for requesting unnecessary medical tests, treatments or procedures, according to a new report from Choosing Wisely Australia.

Health professionals also identified patient expectations, potential for medical litigation and uncertainty of diagnosis as common factors behind low-value health care.

[Read Conversations for Change here](#)



The role of Primary Health Networks in the delivery of primary care reforms

There is a general consensus from all stakeholders that new models for the delivery and funding of health care services are needed, but mechanisms for fostering innovation and leadership to inspire it are lacking. Authored by Dr Lesley Russell and Dr Paresh Dawda, This paper investigates whether Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are fit-for-purpose to drive and foster needed reforms in primary care, and offers suggestions for improving this capability.

[Read the paper](#)



Navigating the maze: an overview of Australia's aged care system

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has released its first background paper on Australia's current aged care system, Navigating the maze. It outlines different aspects of the aged care system, the services currently being delivered in Australia and the areas in need of substantial reform. It is the first of several publications to be released as the work of the Royal Commission proceeds.

[Read Navigating the Maze](#)



#BeHealthAware

#BeHealthAware is a portal to current and reliable online resources on health care in Australia. This web page acts as a gateway to a wide range of health information that will assist you to understand your personal health issues and treatment options and to consider your wellbeing now and into the future.

[Visit Be Health Aware](#)

From the Policy Team

TGA Update on Medical Device Reforms

During 2019, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) will continue to implement changes in response to the Review of Medicines and Medical Devices Regulation (MMDR). The webinar held last month aimed to update consumers on these medical device consultations and answer questions from consumers.

[Watch the webinar & download the presentation](#)

Events



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

With the Federal election looming, what are the top healthcare priorities the next Government needs to address? Three of Australia's leading health advocates - Karen Carey, Sandro Demaio and Stephen Duckett - will outline their top three priorities for change, and answer questions at this National Press Club event co-hosted by the Consumers Health Forum and The George Institute for Global Health.

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)



International Women's Day Breakfast Forum

The George Institute for Global Health, Franklin Women and Jean Hailes are partnering to present a special breakfast discussion on what leadership, balance and the journey to getting there means for women in Australia.

The #BalanceforBetter breakfast at the George Institute in Newtown, Sydney will feature stories from notable women including Leanne Wells, CEO of CHF, Catherine Livingstone AO, Chairman of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Dr Stephanie Fahey, CEO of Austrade and journalist Rae Johnstone as MC.

Date: Thursday 7 March 2019

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)



Partnering in healthcare forum

Patients have better outcomes when we partner with consumers, carers and communities. This forum celebrates involving consumers in their own healthcare - from interacting with their doctor, to hospital activities/decisions and future government strategies.

Both the partnering in healthcare framework and forum have been awarded the [#withconsumers tick](#).

Date: 29 - 30 April 2019

[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

[LEARN MORE AND REGISTER](#)

CHF #withconsumers tick



The #withconsumers tick is a means of demonstrating your organisation's commitment to integrating the experience and insight of consumers into your activities.

The #withconsumers tick is available, on application, for single use in association with national and international conferences, events and publications by organisations or individuals with an interest in health consumer affairs who are able to demonstrate that they put consumers first in healthcare in their activities.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE TICK](#)

Consultations and Surveys



Survey of the mental health lived experience

The Consumers Health Forum and National Rural Health Alliance want to make sure the voices of those who have been affected by mental health are heard loud and clear by the Productivity Commission and Government as they look at mental health. If you have lived experience with mental health directly, as a carer, or as someone whose friends or family have been affected, please give your input into this survey.

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)



Cardiac and vascular health workshop

Do you have lived experience with Heart Disease? The George Institute is hosting a cardiac & vascular health workshop on 12 March in Sydney and looking for healthcare consumer representatives or community advocates to take part.

[REGISTER YOUR INTEREST](#)

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

[Medicare heart checks a healthy step](#)

[Give consumers a say in community pharmacy agreement](#)

[Health reform move a welcome first step](#)

[Need to know? Go to #BeHealthAware](#)

Blogs



The blockbuster of consumer power in health

It has taken a while but something comparable to the impact consumer power has exerted in areas like banking and retail is now emerging in health care. Health care systems, already strained by growing cost and demand are experiencing the forces of change driven by IT and the internet that are demanding more patient-focused services.

[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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