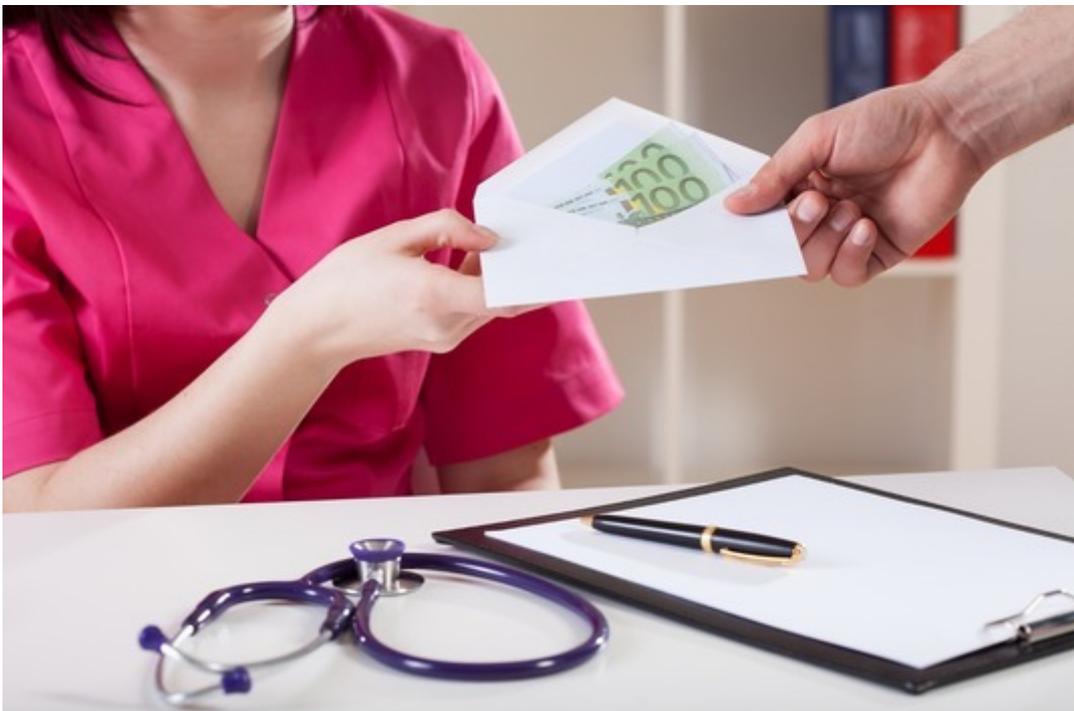


Consumers Shaping Health Volume 12 Issue 1



Out of Pocket Pain Survey Sharpens Focus on Costs



Message from the CEO

CHF's [Out of Pocket Pain survey report](#) has capped off a start to the year which has been heavily focused on the twin issues of private health insurance premiums and medical costs. The survey attracted over 1,200 respondents many of whom expressed their surprise at the personal expense of treatment. We launched the report at Parliament on 5 April with support from Kathy Hayes who spoke of her experience with the high costs of her breast cancer treatment.

CHOICE, the Breast Cancer Network Australia and National Rural Health Alliance also joined as partners in the launch which drew widespread media interest. The *Out of Pocket Pain* survey has come at a pivotal time and makes a number of recommendations for action to improve transparency and encourage reform in this area. At the end of last year, a Senate committee delivered a report calling for much greater scrutiny and transparency of health insurance and medical costs. Then Health Minister, Greg Hunt, opened the year with an announcement of an expert committee to examine out of pocket costs, with CHF the only non-provider representative on the panel. The ALP released its private health insurance policy pledging to establish a Productivity Commission inquiry - something CHF was among the first to call for.

In mid March we held a successful orientation and training program on *Collaborative Pairs* with four pairs of lead consumer advocates and clinicians delivered by the UK's Kings Fund. *Collaborative Pairs Australia* is a promising innovation initiated by CHF in partnership with Western NSW, Western Sydney, North Western Melbourne and South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Networks and the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare. Under this program we will evaluate a national demonstration of a leadership and mentoring initiative designed to promote collaborative practice between consumers and clinicians.

In collaboration with The George Institute for Global Health we hosted the first of our *#Consumers Shaping Health 2018 Thought Leadership Roundtables* on 28 March. With support from the Australian Digital Health Agency, this roundtable involved consumers, researchers, clinicians, policy makers and industry shaping recommendations for 'test bed' sites for digitally enabled models of care to be taken forward under the National Digital Health Strategy: Safe, Seamless and Secure. A report from the roundtable will be available in the near future.

Leanne Wells
Chief Executive Officer
Consumers Health Forum

From the Policy Team

Private health insurance continues to be an important and growing area for CHF policy. In the coming months the first of the reforms announced in October last year will start to be implemented, and CHF is working toward ensuring these are as consumer focused as possible. One way in which we will be doing that is through the results of the out-of-pocket costs survey that we received over 1200 responses to.

We were overwhelmed by the generosity of so many people sharing meaningful and deep stories with us, and we are extremely grateful for your time. If you would like to be specifically notified of any reports or releases we put out pertaining to the survey, please email r.randall@chf.org.au. If you publicised the survey – we would really like to take the opportunity to say thank you to your constituents by writing a short piece in any newsletters you have upcoming. Please get in touch with Rebecca (email above) so we can arrange a specific thank you.

The CHF Policy team and consumer advocates nominated from CHF's Consumer Representatives panel continue to represent the consumer voice at the national stage across a range of issues. The aim of CHF's policy activities is to ensure that the consumer perspective is considered and consumer needs are addressed in the development and review of national health policies and reforms

A complete list of our publications is available at chf.org.au/publications

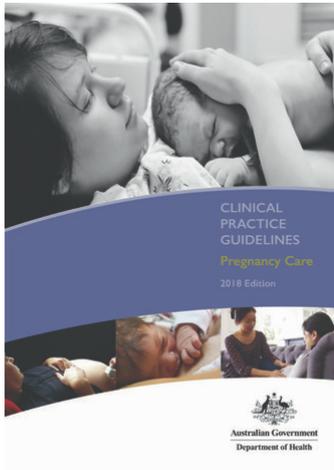
Consumer Resources and News

Out of Pocket Pain Survey Report

Out of pocket medical bills exceeding \$10,000 have become common place for patients with breast cancer and certain chronic conditions, a national survey conducted by CHF found.

The survey report [Out of Pocket Pain](#) and a companion report [Hear Our Pain](#) containing scores of personal stories of people's experience with treatment costs were released this month.





Revised Pregnancy Care Guidelines

The Australian Government Department of Health has released a revised version of the Pregnancy Care Clinical Practice Guidelines.

The 2018 edition of the guidelines combines Module 1 and 2 of the Antenatal Care Guidelines, published in 2012 and 2014 respectively. A number of chapters were reviewed and updated for this edition, in accordance with NHRMC requirements for guideline development.

[View the Guidelines](#)



TGA Adverse Events Survey

Investigation of adverse event ('side effect') reports is an important way that the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) monitors the safety of medicines and vaccines used in Australia.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration is undertaking a survey to seek information about your experiences and attitudes towards key issues related to medicines and their use. Both health professionals and consumers can provide vital first-hand information about their experiences with medicines and vaccines and how these have affected them.

All responses are anonymous and this survey does not collect any personally identifying information.

[Click here to take the survey.](#)



Codeine Story Cards

Consumers Health Forum launched a “storycard” initiative aimed at starting conversations to get the right story across with regard to reducing hazardous use of a toxic, addictive medication and replacing it with information about more effective remedies, including other medications and pain relief therapies.

Sets of six storycards with key messages and relevant illustrations are being distributed through national, state and regional health and community organisations to help people with their pain management and to find alternatives to over-the-counter codeine medications.

The storycards and the supplementary notes can be used by health professionals, support groups or organisations, or between consumers, their friends and families. What do the storycards tell us? The storycards are an engaging visual prompt for positive conversations about pain management. The illustrations relate to everyday life and the challenges of pain management. The cards are specifically designed to help people move forward with their pain management and to find alternatives to over-the-counter medications that contain codeine.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Events and Webinars



#hellomynameis Webinar

A simple introduction by a healthcare professional is not only a sign of respect for the patient but also the first step in building a therapeutic relationship.

In August 2013, during a hospital stay as a terminally ill cancer patient, Dr Kate Granger observed many of the staff who cared for her did not introduce themselves, including the doctor who informed her that the cancer had spread.

Shocked that such a basic step in communication was missing, and with encouragement from her husband to ‘stop whinging and do something about it’, Dr Kate Granger created the #hellomynameis campaign. The campaign advocates for more personalised care and is based on the simple premise of reminding staff to go back to basics and introduce themselves to patient properly.

Following Dr Granger’s death, her husband and co-founder of the campaign is keeping the campaign alive through conference talks across the world, book writing, presenting awards and social media.

[View the webinar](#)

Media

The rising concern about health insurance costs once more prompted keen media interest in CHF’s views. News that many people were having to get approval to

access their superannuation nest egg early to pay their out of pocket expenses drew several requests for media interviews. CHF drew media interest with the announcement of our *Out of Pocket Pain* survey. We issued a release highlighting, on the basis of a BUPA figures, the much higher prevalence and scale of “gap” medical costs than official statistics might otherwise indicate.

In an active start to the year, CHF also joined with PainAustralia in a media campaign to explain the up listing of codeine to prescription only status.

Among a variety of other issues in the news which CHF contributed comment to were the changes to Medicare rules for after hours medical services, and continuing concerns about child obesity rates in Australia.

Leanne undertook several media and tv interviews in the period including with [Channel Seven on the 3.95 per cent rise in PHI premiums](#), and on [ABC's AM program about the ALP's health insurance policy](#).

Media Releases for the period included:

[Health Insurance - let's hear the consumer view](#)

[Radical Dental Plan highlights need for change](#)

No more over the counter codeine - consumer protection better choices

Recent Media Releases

Media Releases for the period included:

- [Health Insurance - let's hear the consumer view](#)
- [Radical Dental Plan highlights need for change](#)
- [No more over the counter codeine - consumer protection better choices](#)
- [Medical gap costs more frequent than official figures suggest](#)
- [Out of pocket pain - share your experience](#)
- [Put our children's health first](#)
- [Consumer healthcare priorities for 2018](#)
- [Health insurance report provides fresh hope for consumers](#)

For a full list of our Media Releases see chf.org.au/media-releases.

Social Media

In 2018, CHF had 2,371 mentions on social media and 503 mentions on news platforms. Join the conversations on our Facebook and Twitter pages to keep updated on the latest milestones in the journey towards a more consumer-centred health system.

Recent Blogs

[More government tax incentives for health insurance](#)

[Let's make the most of My Health Record. It's all about our health](#)

[Patient-centred care as a pillar of our health system - CEDA 2017](#)

[Managing the costs of healthcare](#)

[Patient-centred care is missing in action in Australia](#)

[Who benefits from health insurance reforms? Check the sharemarket](#)

Committee Vacancies

Consumers Health Forum of Australia has been advised of the following consumer representative opportunities.

Pool of Assessors**Audiology Australia and the Australian College of Audiology**

Audiology Australia and the Australian College of Audiology have established a new independent complaints procedure to investigate ethical complaints made against their members in regards to the provision of hearing services and devices.

Deadline: 27 April 2018

ACI and CEC Consumer Council**Agency for Clinical Innovation and Clinical Excellence Commission**

The Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) and Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) are establishing a joint Consumer Council in 2018. The purpose is to create a stronger consumer voice for safety, quality and innovation in NSW health across both organisations.

Deadline: 7 May 2018

These can also be found at <https://chf.org.au/committee-vacancies>

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.](#)

Change which emails you get from CHF [here.](#)

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