

CHF welcomes the HTA Review Final Report

Wednesday 11 September 2024

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia has welcomed the release of the final reports of the Enhance HTA and Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Policy and Method Review.

HTA is the process Government uses to decide if and when medications might be subsidised by Government. This is important for consumers as Government subsidies make medicines more affordable so guarantee and allow access to important medicines.

CHF is happy to see this process take the next step forward and is pleased to see the establishment of the implementation group to guide the HTA reforms.

CHF believes it is important to include commercial and clinical processes and perspectives in the process of reform. However, in some cases this is bound create a real or perceived conflict of interest. To help mitigate conflicts of interest, CHF calls for the implementation of HTA reforms to actively seek balance by including in the implementation group a quota of consumer representatives with no previous experience in the medical and pharmaceutical field.

“As the HTA reforms move into the implementation phase, what we must see is the safety of the community and access to safe health technologies be the priority of the implementation group. The financial bottom line of pharmaceutical companies and wish lists of industry cannot take precedence over the safety of the Australian community,” said CHF CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny.

The Enhance HTA Report makes several recommendations to make consumer engagement and representation easier across the HTA process. These are welcome moves and further highlight the importance of having meaningful and accessible consumer engagement methods.

“It is clear from the final report that the Government is committing to actively involving consumers in the HTA process.

“CHF is particularly pleased to see the recommendation to enable timely consumer engagement and more transparent communication to consumers. It is an issue that CHF has advocated for. If implemented faithfully, this measure will provide great benefit to Australian healthcare consumers,” said Dr Deveny.

CHF recommends that the Government consults widely with the community through various well established consumer engagement methods to ensure the voice of the community is heard and not forgotten during the reform implementation.

CHF stands ready to assist and support the Government as it moves into the next implementation phase of the HTA reforms.

“At the end of the day, what we want to see is all Australians being able to access the medication and health technology. For some this will lead to an improved quality of life, while for others it will be lifesaving,” said Dr Deveny.

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