

## Health Care Homes trials vital for consumers and too important to delay

Patients stand to benefit greatly under Health Care Homes and the first stage of the scheme should begin as soon as practicable, the Consumers Health Forum says.

“We urge both GPs and the Government to ensure that patients do not lose out because of avoidable disagreements over the scheme,” the CEO of the Consumers Health Form, Leanne Wells, said.

“We suggest the Government consider a staggered approach to the HCH trials, with the practices that have expressed interest and are ready commencing in July and others able to join later when they are ready.

“There is a long-standing recognition that we need to modernise Medicare and the fee-for-service arrangements so that general practice teams have additional flexibility to offer tailored care.

“Health Care Homes has the potential to transform primary health care particularly for those with complex and chronic illness. The principle aims of Health Care Homes to encourage more team-based, co-ordinated and patient-focused care offers the potential of more satisfied health practitioners and patients.

“Developing models of care that will stimulate more connected services does require major changes in behaviour, payment and administrative systems for general practice. We understand that GPs want more clarity about what such a significant scheme could mean to their practice. At the same time, we want general practice to embrace this primary health care reform with confidence and appropriate levels of support.

“The sooner Australia can initiate the HCH programme, the sooner Government, clinicians and patients can assess the strengths and weaknesses of what’s required and make changes accordingly.

“We have acknowledged and supported the leadership shown by the Health Minister, Sussan Ley, to bring about this much needed change.

“This can be a win, win.

**Contact:** Mark Metherell, 0429 111 986

**Consumers shaping health**

“We know that Medicare is deeply prized by consumers and we also know that it is in serious need of a re-boot.

“Let us not squander this opportunity to bring primary care and Medicare into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” Ms Wells said.

ENDS

**Contact:** Mark Metherell, 0429 111 986

**Consumers shaping health**