

CHF supports *Healthy people, healthy systems*

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The Consumers Health Forum welcomes the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association's blueprint for a national health agreement as a much-needed stimulus for a serious rethink of Australia's health system.

"We strongly support many of the aims of the report *Healthy people, healthy systems*," the CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells said.

"In too many corners of Australia's health system, whether it be Medicare, primary care, prevention or health insurance, there is a lack of rigorous evaluation and less than optimal use of available data and knowledge to improve services.

"We back AHHA's call for Australia to re-orientate the healthcare system over the next 10 years by enabling outcomes-focused and value-based health care," Ms Wells said.

"We agree that the national hospitals agreement requires reform, that it, should be negotiated for the longer-term and that we need much better coordination and integration to promote consumer-centred health care.

"While there is undoubtedly a pressing need for a more nationally cohesive leadership and administration of health, we are not sure a national health authority as prescribed by AHHA

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would achieve this. It could risk imposing another layer of management and decision-making with no certainty of any benefit.

“On the other hand, moves to greater regional coordination of health services, is the best way to achieve integrated locally responsive services. We know that integration is best achieved when decisions about how services are configured and organised are taken as close to the point of care delivery as possible by people who know and understand local services and need. Joint planning, funds pooling and joint commissioning by PHNs and LHDs should be actively explored.

“We would urge governments to note the consistency of advice coming from Australian health leaders about how we can strengthen and improve our health system. CHF presented an Issues Paper containing our ideas for health system improvements to Minister Hunt at our Consumer and Community Roundtable in August, see:

https://chf.org.au/sites/default/files/docs/chf_ministerial_roundtable_issues_paper_final.pdf

“The need for integrated care, workforce development and reform and a reorientation to primary and preventive care were central recommendations.

“We would welcome more performance reporting on such measures as patient reported health outcomes and experiences of care and deeper examination of how that care will be delivered in the future and by whom.

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“Prevention funding needs to be increased and to be explicitly tied to evidence-based interventions.

“AHHA’s chair, Dr Deborah Cole, states that if there is a genuine commitment to delivering patient-centred care that improves health outcomes, consumers must be genuinely engaged in co-designing services and how the entire health system functions across hospitals, primary healthcare and prevention activities.

“We fully agree and hope all health leaders would actively support that rationale. Only when we involve consumer insights in planning and evaluation will achieve better health, better experience of care and better value care” Ms Wells said.

The *Healthy people, healthy systems* report is at:

http://ahha.asn.au/sites/default/files/docs/policy-issue/ahha_blueprint_2017.pdf

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