

## **Consumers Health Forum welcomes the new Minister for Health and calls for more action on Primary Health Care**

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Consumers Health Forum (CHF), the national peak body for the consumer voice in health policy and care, welcomes the Hon Mark Butler MP to his position as Minister for Health and Aged Care in the new Cabinet.

The CHF CEO, Ms Leanne Wells said that the organisation and members are looking forward working collaboratively on health care initiatives under the new government.

“Our health system is experiencing many pain points and has been tested like never before by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen many fault lines exposed, as well as opportunities for reform.

It is a time for action on health reform, primary care, health and medicines access and affordability, alternatives to hospital care and prevention. Without this, our health system faces sustainability challenges” said Ms Wells.

“Minister Butler has acknowledged the work done under the previous government on health system design and we urge him to seize the opportunity to embrace and implement the directions set in the 10 Year Primary Health Care Plan 2022-2032.

“In the first instance we welcome Labor’s election pledges to strengthen Medicare and look forward to joining the Minister’s Taskforce and clinical colleagues on the design and implementation of those reforms” said Ms Wells.

“We will be seeking to collaborate productively with the Minister, his advisers and the Department on strategies to even further elevate the

**Contact:** Jenna Gray, 0429 111 986

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consumer voice in policy and program development. Better policy and program design comes from consumer participation,” she said.

“We also congratulate Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Ged Kearney MP, and welcome the Minister for Aged Care, Minister for Sport, the Hon Annika Wells MP, and Assistant Minister for Mental Health, Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health, the Hon Emma McBride to their portfolios.”

During the election campaign CHF advocated to all parties for health and social care measures to address the issues of most concern to people.

“Our priorities include reshaping the primary health care system to be more inclusive for all Australians, with better access to primary care and medicines, address the primary care workforce issues which are now even more evident, and ensure health is affordable and fair,” said Ms Wells.

“Improved access to GP-led multidisciplinary teams, greater patient affordability and support for better self-management of chronic conditions warrants major investment: it is essential for a high-performing health system” said Ms Wells.

We look forward to the resumption of the review of the National Medicines Policy and advancing various programs related to quality use of medicines are also important, as well as the government’s leadership on the new Centre for Disease Control.

“Making medicines more affordable as the costs of living bites and ensuring the National Health Priority Area of medicines safety and quality has programs devoted to it are priorities,” said Ms Wells.

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**Media contact:**

Jenna Gray

Tel 0428 111 986

Email: [J.Gray@chf.org.au](mailto:J.Gray@chf.org.au)

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