

CHF calls on National Cabinet to harmonise ambulance costs across Australia

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The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) is calling on National Cabinet and National Health Ministers to bring harmonisation, reform and fairness to the way Australians are charged for using an ambulance.

CHF's calls come after the ABC today published an article which showed how the current system is a postcode lottery, with some states entirely covering ambulance fees, some operating a subsidy, while others use a user-pay system.

The status-quo also adds complexity should a resident of one state call an ambulance while visiting another state, which may or may not have reciprocal arrangements in place.

“It's really hard to see how the current system on the whole provides a fair and balanced approach to ambulance cover for all Australians, said CHF CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny”.

CHF believes that National Cabinet and the Australian Health Minister's Meeting provides a realistic avenue to bring about ambulance fee harmonisation.

“In recent times we have seen National Cabinet be a very effective mechanism to get real reform across the Australian healthcare system, whether it be with how Australian nationally dealt with COVID or more recently with the hospital funding reforms,” said Dr Deveny.

CHF believes that Australia should adopt a universal approach to ambulance fees. Under this model Australians wouldn't have to pay for calling an ambulance.

“What we want to see ideally is a future where no Australian needs to worry about where they are, or the cost involved in calling for an ambulance. Medical need should be the only consideration for people needing an ambulance.

A country like Australia can do this and frankly I think it’s what most Australians expect. Isn’t this why we pay taxes? I think most Australians would see this as a good use of their taxes.” said Dr Deveny.

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