

healthUPdate

27 March 2020

From the CEO



How can we care for the carers?

A bewildering question confronting us now is who cares for the carers?

They are the nurses, doctors, allied health, home carers and many others whose duty and responsibility attending to coronavirus patients exposes them to greater risk of contracting the virus.

Even more troubling are reports of health workers in Australia being abused and assaulted as they strive to check who may or may not have the invisible virus whose presence provokes fear and anxiety.

Reasonable people will appreciate and feel deeply grateful for the individuals who put themselves in the way of COVID-19 and panicking patients.

We can best show our appreciation by following the advice to reduce our risk of catching the virus — washing our hands frequently, staying at home,

avoiding crowds and physical contact with others at all times. Reducing spread reduces risk to others including health workers.

We can all care for the carers by taking those steps.

And we can take steps that will reduce the need for those nurses and doctors and others to have physical contact yet maintain effective health care.

CHF along with several other health groups has urged the Government to expand Medicare coverage of telehealth to all accredited health care workers.

The Government is taking a staged approach to MBS telehealth items.

The Government firstly introduced MBS-rebatable telehealth items for GPs, medical specialists and mental health providers where either the patient or provider is required to self-isolate or the patient is considered vulnerable to COVID-19.

This week, we saw these arrangements extend to allow all vulnerable GPs and health professionals use telehealth consultations with all their patients. For example, this includes health providers who are aged at least 70, pregnant, or immune compromised.

However at a time where consumers are being urged to social distance and stay at home, these measures would mean the vast majority of consumers needing ongoing, routine health attention of some sort — whether it be a chronic disease check or script refresher — would not be eligible for a Medicare benefit if they undertook a phone or skype consultation with a practitioner. Patients and providers would be exposed to risk that could be avoided if the consultation could be done remotely.

CHF has joined with many others to advocate for telehealth for all patients, with or without COVID-19, to see any GP, medical specialist, nurse or allied health professional. We are told that such measures are at a co-design stage with the professional associations and we can expect some announcements soon.

Now more than ever consumers need a responsive and agile Medicare system that keeps patients and providers well during this crisis.

Here's hoping the Government will soon announce measures to bring carers and patients closer, clinically but not spatially.

Leanne Wells
Chief Executive Officer



National Health Information Strategy - webinar for consumers

ABC's Dr Norman Swan joins a special webinar on the National Health Information Strategy (NHIS) on crunch issues like public trust & personal health information.

Consumers are invited to share insights into what the NHIS should look like to improve the healthcare system for all Australians.

This webinar has been postponed due to the COVID19 pandemic. We are planning a new format delivered remotely by our expert panelists.

CHF will lead the consumer focused discussion on the NHIS development. The new date will be released shortly.

CHF has partnered with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) for this project.

[MORE INFO](#)



Coronavirus update



Public Health authorities are urgently acting to contain the spread of Covid-19 as many more cases of the disease are confirmed in countries outside China.

CHF reinforces the message from the **Chief Medical Officer** and the **Department of Health** that people should turn to the most recent information posted daily on the Department's website on the COVID19 pandemic and to the [World Health Organisation](#).

The Department of Health has a dedicated page with [resources for health professionals](#).

Healthdirect, a service which provides trusted, quality health information online and over the phone, has expanded its service to help [the public and health professionals](#) stay informed.

Victorian-based **Health Translations** has [resources and factsheets](#) translated into Chinese, Korean, Italian and Farsi (Persian). These are now available on the Department of Health website.

CHF has set up a section in the information portal **Be Health Aware** for [useful links for consumers](#).

DEPT OF HEALTH WEBSITE

My Health Record recent upgrade



The My Health Record website was recently upgraded to improve usability for consumers and healthcare providers.

The changes in this new release improve the way a person's medicines list appears in the My Health Record and will provide a better experience for consumers logging in and setting security controls.

CONTROL ACCESS TO YOUR RECORD

2020 National influenza vaccination program



Advice from the Chief Medical Officer

The annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent influenza and its complications. It is recommended for all people aged 6 months and over (unless contraindicated).

To meet the anticipated demand for seasonal influenza vaccines in 2020, the Australian Government will be securing the largest supply of seasonal influenza vaccines ever through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for people most at risk.

NIP vaccines will be available in April, subject to local supply.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Media releases and notices

Expand telehealth to stop spread of coronavirus

The demand for isolation and social distancing forced by coronavirus makes it imperative for telehealth to be supported across as many accredited health services as possible [MEDIA RELEASE: 23 MAR 2020](#)

Planned telehealth expansion welcome, but must look beyond doctors alone

Four leading health organisations have urged the Government to expand telehealth to nurses to reduce COVID-19 infection risks and support care of chronically ill people at home [MEDIA RELEASE: 23 MAR 2020](#)

CHF Summit: Shifting Gears - change of date [BLOG POST: 25 MAR 2020](#)

[All Media Releases and Blogposts](#)

Health funds announce commitment to financial relief for members impacted by COVID 19

Private Healthcare Australia has released a statement that if you are experiencing financial distress as a result of the COVID19 pandemic, members should contact their health fund to discuss their options.

Chief Executive, Dr Rachel David, said that health funds would be introducing measures to provide financial relief to members and that Health Funds are currently putting programs in place to provide support.

[READ MORE](#)

Conferences and workshops



Summit - Shifting gears

The **CHF Summit: Shifting Gears** has been postponed until **18-19 March 2021** due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The closing dates for abstract submissions and registrations have been extended. We look forward to welcoming you to our rescheduled conference in March 2021.

Keynote speakers include: ABC TV's Ellen Fanning, Dr Kate Mulligan, Director, Policy and Communications for the Alliance for Healthier Communities in Toronto, and Vincent Dumez, Co-Director and patient partner at the Centre of Excellence on Partnering with Patients and the Public, University of Montreal - [read more](#)

The summit will offer the opportunity for both organisations and consumers to come together to explore, discuss and grow the concept and practice of consumer-centred care, and be at the forefront of system change.

Submissions for abstracts are also **now open**. We invite you to propose topics relevant to contemporary issues *in health reform from a consumer perspective*. See more about [topics for submissions](#).

CHF SUMMIT 2021

Consultations & Surveys

My Health Record Consumer Experience Survey

Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) and the Australian Digital Health Agency (the Agency) invites you to participate in this survey to share your experience using My Health Record.

The overall purpose of the survey is to better understand consumer experiences of using My Health Record in real life situations. An additional aim is to develop a series of case studies to capture opportunities for

improvement and highlighted what is working well with My Health Record, from a consumer perspective.

Before you complete the survey, read the [Information Sheet](#).

The survey will close COB Tuesday, 14 April 2020.

If you have any questions, please contact Project Lead, **Leanne Kelly** on 02 6273 5444 or l.kelly@chf.org.au

COMPLETE THE SURVEY

Australia's Health Panel



Australia's Health Panel allows consumers to comment on health policy and issues, and offer feedback on trends and discussions.

Join **Australia's Health Panel** and have your say on today's issues in health care. Please share details about Australia's Health Panel with your members. Our current survey is open and asks for your views on telehealth services in Australia.

COMPLETE THE SURVEY

Consumer Representatives Program

Consumer Representative Appointments



Jo Root, nominated to the ACCC - Consumer Consultative Committee.

Dianne Smith, nominated to the DoH - Diagnostic Imaging Advisory Committee.

Liz Robinson, renominated to the ACSQHC - Multipurpose Services Project Advisory Committee

Consumer Representative Reports

CHF expects and appreciates reports from CHF nominated consumer representatives. These reports help keep CHF informed of consumer representative work.

Consumer representative reports can be made online, via email, mail or phone. CHF thanks the following consumer representatives for keeping us up to date on their work.

Geraldine Robertson, MBS Review - Diagnostic Imaging Implementation Liaison Group

Joanne Baumgartner, Clinical Trials: Impact & Quality (CT:IQ) - CT:IQ Steering Committee

Colleen Papadopoulos, DoH - Prostheses Clinical Advisory Group - Orthopaedic (Knees - KPCAG)

Consumer Representative Vacancies

CHF nominates consumer representatives to high level committees and those related to funded priority areas. Calls for nominations are made via *healthUPdate* and the CHF website. Not all opportunities are advertised due to time limitations or because CHF decides to target invitations due to the specific work or strategic nature of the work involved.

More information about all the opportunities below can be found on our Consumer opportunities webpage.

If you have any questions, please contact the person listed or alternatively, our Consumer and Member Relationship Coordinator, Ghislaine Martin, on 02 6273 5444 or email g.martin@chf.org.au.

SEE ALL OUR CONSUMER REP VACANCIES

Reference Group for the Post-market Review of Medicines for Smoking Cessation

The Department of Health

There are currently three pharmacological interventions for smoking cessation available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS): nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), varenicline, and bupropion. The post-

market review (PMR) of medicines for smoking cessation will re-assess the PBS restrictions in the context of the latest available evidence, best clinical practice and cost-effectiveness.

The Reference Group will provide a platform for key stakeholders and technical experts to provide advice to the review. Consumer representatives are invited to apply.

The appointment is for an eighteen month term from June 2020 to 31 December 2021. The work will consist of three or four face-to-face meetings in 2020 and 2021, to be held in Canberra and possibly Brisbane.

Expressions of interest close Sun 29 March 2020 (midnight AEDT).

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

Consumer Advisory Group

NPS MedicineWise

NPS MedicineWise is establishing a Consumer Advisory Group to advise on best practice for consumer and community engagement as well as provide consumer input to influence the work of NPS MedicineWise.

The Consumer Advisory Group will consist of eight members - a mix of consumer representatives and consumer engagement experts.

Interested consumer representatives will have knowledge of the consumer issues around the quality use of medicines and medical tests, have the ability to challenge the status quo and promote innovative thinking and be able to engage constructively in a committee environment.

This application is for two CHF nominated places. *NPS MedicineWise is also directly recruiting a chair and a number of consumer representatives.*

Expressions of interest close 5:30pm on Tues 31 March 2020 (AEDT).

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

General Practice Accreditation Coordinating Committee

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC)

General practice accreditation is voluntary in Australia and is designed to support implementation of processes and systems to improve the quality of care for patients attending accredited general practices. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) develops the Standards for General Practices against which practices are assessed for accreditation.

The General Practice Accreditation Coordinating Committee provides oversight and input on issues relating to the implementation and

assessment of the RACGP Standards for general practices as part of the National General Practice Accreditation Scheme.

Applications are invited to be on this committee which involves two teleconferences up to December 2020. The work is likely to be ongoing.

Expressions of interest close 26 April 2020 (midnight AEDT).

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

Full details of committee vacancies are only accessible on our website by our members and consumer representatives. If you do not have access and would like to apply, please contact Ghislaine Martin on 02 6273 5444 or g.martin@chf.org.au.

[BECOME A MEMBER](#)

Other Consumer Representative Vacancies

This section is for consumer representative opportunities that CHF does not provide nominations for. Members can work directly with other stakeholders to nominate consumer representatives to committees that are of interest to them.

CHF checks that consumer participation is supported with coverage of travel costs and sitting fees, however CHF does not prescribe an amount for sitting fees as committee requirements vary.

Medical Research Future Fund - Rural, Regional and Remote Clinical Trial Enabling Infrastructure - Grant Assessment Panel

Department of Health

DoH is reviewing the grant design and processes to increase emphasis on the potential impacts/benefits of proposed projects and the translational focus of the MRFF.

The Department is seeking consumer representatives for the Grant Assessment Panel, with experience in clinical trials or health research or health services in rural, regional and remote areas.

The work consists of one day of pre-reading followed by a single meeting in Melbourne expected to be held on 29 May 2020.

Travel costs, sitting fees and a pre-reading fee will be covered by the Department of Health.

Contact the Department of Health via email at ClinicalTrialsTeam@health.gov.au for your enquiries.

Applications close on Sunday 29 March 2020 (midnight AEDT)

MORE INFORMATION

Consumer Advisory Group - Chair and Consumer Representatives

NPS MedicineWise

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The Consumer Advisory Group will consist of 8 members - a mix of consumer representatives and consumer engagement experts.

Members will have knowledge of the consumer issues around the quality use of medicines and medical tests, have the ability to challenge the status quo and promote innovative thinking and be able to engage constructively in a committee environment.

Apply for positions of chair and consumer representatives directly to NPS MedicineWise. *Applications are also open is for two CHF nominated places.*

To apply, submit your expression of interest through [this online application](#).

Contact Bronwyn Walker at NPS MedicineWise via email at Bronwyn.walker@nps.org.au or on (02) 8217 8784 should you have any queries.

Applications close 5:30pm AEST on Tues 31 March 2020

MORE INFORMATION



We sent you this email because you opted to receive this newsletter from the [Consumer's Health Forum](#).

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