

# Consumers Shaping Health



News and views on health consumer issues - July 2022



## Back to the fundamentals

It is well known that consumer and community wellbeing and welfare is gauged by more than economic metrics. As Sandro Demaio, VicHealth CEO says, GDP is not a good measure of a nation's progress or prosperity. It misses the mark on critical elements, and often overlooks deep inequities. That's why CHF has welcomed Treasurer Jim Chalmers' commitment to the [inclusion of a wellbeing](#) chapter in the Federal Government's first budget in October.

The United States Supreme Court's decision to overturn the constitutional right to abortion and its implications for women's choice and control to manage their own health needs has created a furore of community debate. It prompted several statements admonishing the decision and its implications for women's health from the World Health Organisation (WHO), CHF members and professional associations, all concerns that CHF echoes. It is also a reminder of the importance of our [Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#) in governing the way healthcare is delivered, accessed and experienced.

Speaking of fundamentals, integration and better finding our way in Australia's health and care system remains a challenge. At the end of June, we published the [latest edition of Health Voices](#). I am very proud of the calibre of contributors in this discussion on patient navigation and urge you to dip into the articles. Patients, funders and service providers must

weave their way through Federal and State funded services, private versus public, and regional versus urban services to access various options for care. All of this is restricted by what individuals or families can afford in time, money, and resources. While patient navigation between services is crucial in health system design, some organisations have successfully trialled “patient navigators” to help bridge gaps. Read about achievements from these trials and how we might use them elsewhere in the health system.

As we are continually reminded, COVID is still with us: we need to continue to remain vigilant as a community in protecting ourselves and those most vulnerable to infection. We are facing a winter with rising cases, changes to some protections that had been previously mandatory, and a wind back of measures such as telephone-based telehealth, access to free RATs for concession card holders and COVID leave. As consumer organisations it is incumbent on us to reinforce the public health messaging around the benefits of masking up, social distancing where we can, and full vaccination. As this next COVID wave is upon us, we also need to keep access to safe healthcare maximised – this protects patients and providers. CHF has advocated for a reversal of the changes to [telephone-based telehealth](#) which were introduced on 1 July. While video-based telehealth and in-person consultations might be gold standards, telephone consultations are essential for many.

There is no doubt the community has embraced telehealth. For more commentary on this, I would encourage you to read "[How to use research to design a better health care system](#)" by Annette Schmiede, CEO, Digital Health CRC and "[A connected health system](#)" by Julia Nesbitt, Digital Policy Adviser, CHF.

Finally, we are delighted to announce the new Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon. Mark Butler, MP will be joining us for a webinar for consumers and members on 5 August 2022. This webinar will give insights into the Minister’s priorities for health and an opportunity to discuss big issues that we hope to see progressing in the next year.

We will be seeking 8-10 people from our membership and networks to nominate a question and to put that question live, ABC Q&A style to the Minister during the webinar. Stay tuned for a special bulletin inviting responses to that opportunity. You can add questions and [register for the webinar](#), here

REGISTER

**Leanne Wells**  
Chief Executive Officer





## Another COVID wave is rolling out, so what more could governments be doing?

Find out more about the vaccine plus strategy, who is advocating for it, and what health policy leaders think, and what the politicians are saying in this wrap up from Dr Melissa Sweet, Croakey Health Media.

Croakey Health Media asked a range of health leaders for their views on the vaccines-plus messaging, especially when the recent milestone of Australia recording the 10,000 death from COVID – and growing concern about new Omicron strains.

[READ MORE](#)



## What matters most in health care?

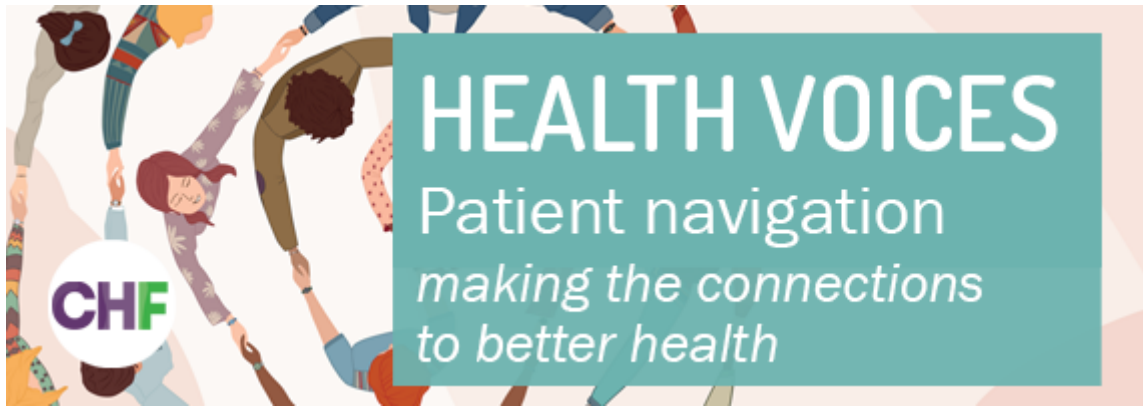
The crisis in emergency departments across the country is being made worse by significant strain across the health system, particularly in primary care.

In May 2022, CHF co-convoked a Primary Health Leaders Summit with the Primary Health Care Co-operative (all 31 Primary Health Networks).

It does not happen often, but there is currently unprecedented consensus among national leaders and health stakeholders that primary health care reform is urgently needed – and we must look beyond hospital funding to reshape the whole system. CHF CEO, Leanne Wells and WentWest CEO, Ray Messom penned this op-ed on the outcomes from the Summit. [Read more](#)

Watch [the video](#), read [the report](#); and an update from [Medical Republic](#)

[READ MORE](#)



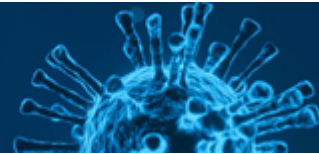
## Health care - can you find it?

Health Voices: patient navigation - making the connections to better health

The role of navigators to help health consumers access different aspects of medical and social care, and treatment – and other ways to support consumers and carers – is becoming essential in Australia’s complex and fragmented health care system.

[READ MORE](#)

## COVID-19 Updates



### COVID-19 updates

The Department of Health and Aged Care provides regular updates on COVID-19

- COVID-19 oral treatment eligibility has been expanded from 11 July 2022. New eligibility includes updated [age limits and risk factors](#).
- Eligibility for fourth doses of COVID-19 vaccines has been expanded. It is recommended that people aged 50 and over have third and fourth doses. People aged 30 to 49 can receive one if they choose.
- If you’ve had COVID-19, you should get your next dose of vaccine 3 months after your infection.

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

### The Australian Medical Association’s private health summit: on hot tubs and other reform options

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) hosted a Private Health Summit on 30 June, addressing affordability of private health insurance premiums and the delicate balance between the private and public health system. The AMA released a discussion paper proposing a new private health regulating authority. CHF responded to the proposal, presenting at the Summit, in our [media release here](#) and in an

For an in-depth break-down of views from the key players, [this article](#) in Croakey Health Media by Jennifer Doggett steps you through the main points being made by various parties.

The AMA is still seeking input on its [discussion paper](#) and welcomes feedback from interested stakeholders.

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## WEBINAR



### Meet with the Minister

We are delighted to announce the new Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon. Mark Butler, MP will be joining us for a webinar for consumers, members and stakeholders on 5 August 2022.

This webinar will give insights into the Minister's priorities for health and an opportunity to discuss the big issues that we hope to see progressed in the first term of the Labor Government.

We will choose a spectrum of submitted questions and invite the those submitting them to put them directly live to the Minister – ABC "Q&A" style.

We encourage you to think of topics or questions you'd like to put to the Minister. You can register for the webinar, or add your questions.

Please get in touch with [communications@chf.org.au](mailto:communications@chf.org.au) if you want to know more.

[REGISTER](#)



**Are you paying too much for your medicines?**

Medicines are important for many people to help them stay healthy. The government's Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) makes sure people pay no more than \$42.50 per script for many medicines. There are also other ways to bring costs down

[READ MORE](#)

Think diabetes  
isn't serious?

**DIABETES  
CAN BE LIFE-  
THREATENING**

## Why we should rethink diabetes

National Diabetes Week is 10 - 16 July 2022.

Diabetes Australia is drawing attention to the relationship between diabetes and mental health for this year's campaign *#RethinkDiabetes*

You [can participate by](#) watching videos, sharing on social media or learning more about preventing diabetes

There are two Facebook live events on Diabetes and Mental Health:

Heads Together – Facebook live event and online forum on Wed, 13 July 2022 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm (AEST) and a Q&A about diabetes and mental health with Tara Griffin, clinical psychologist, on Thurs 14 July 2022 1:00 to 2:00 pm (AEST)

See the Diabetes Australia [Facebook page](#) or the [campaign website](#)

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

## Re-imagining Consumer Engagement: Health system resilience & Covid-19

This webinar presents findings from a joint study by Health Consumers NSW and ACHEEV on consumer engagement in the NSW Covid-19 response

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSUMERS**

**NEW**



## Medical Cost Finder Tool Project

The Department of Health and Aged Care is currently redeveloping the [Medical Costs Finder](#) tool to better meet consumer needs. CHF will be leading consumer participation in the review, drawing on consumers' views on medical costs finding processes and the revised tool.

Apply for this or [find out more](#)

Closes midnight (AEST) on Wed 20 July 2022.

Contact **Research and Data Policy Officer, James Ansell**, email: [J.Ansell@chf.org.au](mailto:J.Ansell@chf.org.au) if you have any questions

[READ MORE](#)

### CONSULTATIONS

AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION  
ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

Consultation  
NOW OPEN



## Your views on medical imaging

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care is in the business of creating standards that ensure the safety and quality of healthcare for everyone across the nation. Medical imaging services are now getting our attention.

There's a lot of imaging going on. In Australia more than 27 million diagnostic images are funded under Medicare each year.

Most of us, at some time, have been sent off for a medical scan to find the cause of a health problem.

It might have been an x-ray, angiography, CT scan, fluoroscopy, MRI, mammography, nuclear medicine, orthopantomography or ultrasound. All those technologies create medical images for health practitioners to work out what's going on and what treatments need to happen next.

Tell us about your experience before 24 July 2022.

Your views are important to this work, and right now, they can make a difference. We have a short survey for you that will take up only a few minutes of your time

[READ MORE](#)

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## Australia's Health Panel



### What can you tell us about communication in healthcare?

Communication between doctors, nurses and other providers is so important to better health outcomes and patient experience, as we discussed in this webinar "[Communication in health care](#)" co-hosted with the ANU Institute for Communication in Health Care.

For the July 2022 Australia's Health Panel survey, we want to know more about your experiences with communication in health care settings.

Help us identify how health providers currently communicate with patients and what improvements can be recommended.

Please [share this survey](#) with your family and friends.

Australia's Health Panel is an interactive online platform devoted to harnessing the views of Australians about the state of the nation's health care system.

Find out more about what you said - on [self-financed health care](#), [Medicare](#), and [private health](#) - [See the results](#) or [Join the Panel](#)

**AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH PANEL**



## Get involved



### Consumer representative program

Consumer representatives are nominated for national committees to ensure that the views and interests of health consumers are represented at the national level. CHF supports consumer representatives by providing resources in a number of ways. Find out how to become a [Consumer Rep](#)

[CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM](#)

### Special Interest Groups

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are a way for members and the broader consumer community to be involved in our advocacy work and in shaping policy.

Special Interest Groups to focus on Primary Health Care, Research & Data, Digital Health, Safety & Quality and Rural & Remote. SIGs help us to features even more consumer insight and perspective reflective of our Australian community. Find out more about CHF [Special Interest Groups](#).

Opportunities to join SIGs are advertised in newsletters and on our website.

[FIND OUT ABOUT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS](#)



### Media releases and editorial

[What matters most in health care?](#)

*If Australians need evidence of our national health crisis, we should look no further than the Census. Eight million of us, nearly one-third of the entire population, now have a long-term health condition. Are we willing to accept this ...* 7 July 2022 — Blog

### [Make antivirals available to more patients – and help close down the COVID surge](#)

*We support the call from the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and others to expand access to anti-virals beyond the current restrictions and restore funding for home delivery of medicines....* 6 July 2022 — Media release

### [We have the best of health care services, but are patients finding the care they need?](#)

*Patient navigation is pivotal to helping patients connect with services they need in Australia's complex and fragmented health care system. The latest edition of the Health Voices ejournal covers the topic of patient navigation ...* 5 July 2022 — Media release

### [Private health reform – what is the best way forward?](#)

*We welcome the call from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) for the discussion on private health in Australia. CHF agrees that the private health system needs reform and the AMA's discussion paper is ..* 1 July 2022 — Media release

### [How to use research to design a better health care system](#)

*This Australian Health Consumer Sentiment Survey showed us that Australians have considerable faith in our healthcare system. With 84 per cent of respondents saying they were satisfied with the health services they received, we're clearly getting a lot of things right... writes Annette Schmiede CEO of the Digital Health CRC ....* 23 June 2022 — Blog

### [A connected health system](#)

*As digital ways of doing things are becoming part of our everyday lives and, as we all get better at it, we see its value and indeed its potential writes Digital Health Adviser, Julia Nesbitt ...* 21 June 2022 — Blog

### [Tackling loneliness with a social prescription](#)

*Loneliness and social disconnection are hidden health risk factors, and as more Australians than ever before report experiencing loneliness, as a symptom of a more disconnected society and compounded by pandemic restrictions, health advocacy groups and clinicians are calling for initiatives to ..* 17 June 2022 — Media release

### [How communication in health care eases confusion, pain and reduces misdiagnosis](#)

*CHF and the Australian National University's Institute for Communication in Health Care (ICH) co-hosted a national, interdisciplinary webinar. Read more about the presentations by the team of researchers and consumer advisers ...* 9 June 2022 — Blog

READ ALL MEDIA RELEASES & OPINION

## CHFTalks webinar series



### Webinar replays

- Automated decision making and AI in health — [watch the replay](#).
- The role of health communication in health care — [watch the replay](#).
- Primary Health Reform Leaders Summit — [view more](#)
- What does the election mean for health? — [watch the replay](#).
- The Voice of Australian Health Consumers — [watch the replay](#).
- Consumer Assessors: improving healthcare and service outcomes — [watch the replay](#).

CHF YouTube channel

## Resources and Information

Turn to the website of the [Department of Health](#) to find the most recent, verified information, posted daily.

Use [Healthdirect Australia](#), the Australian Government Health advice portal for consumers, for [information on COVID-19](#), the [symptom checker](#) and helpline: 1800 022 222.

Healthdirect provides free, approved medical advice and has delivered information to Australians on COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic. Tools and information on COVID-19 can be accessed from the [COVID-19 section](#) of the Healthdirect website.

### NPS MedicineWise

A new [information hub from NPS MedicineWise](#) will help you be medicine wise

**Be Health Aware** - [CHF portal for health resources](#)

The **Australian Commission of Safety and Quality** has published a [FAQ page](#) on the **safe use of masks** for consumers and a [factsheet you can download](#).

## Become a member

As a member of CHF you will be kept up to date on key health reform issues through our publications and member alerts. CHF membership enables you to influence the national health agenda by contributing to CHF surveys and polls, consultations and campaigns. Members can draw on CHF position statements, media releases and policy submissions to inform your work and advocacy.

[JOIN US - Become a member](#)

[Consumers Health Forum](#)

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