

Consumers Shaping Health

CHF
Consumers Health
Forum OF Australia



News and views on health consumer issues - June 2022



In the perfect storm of crises, can the new government bring about the change we seek?

Now that the election is over and the winners confirmed, we can see signs that the incoming Labor Government is wasting little time getting down to business on its election promises. There's also other kinds of change in our national parliament with increased numbers on the cross bench and more diversity in its overall composition.

There are other firsts such as the first Indigenous woman as Minister for Indigenous Australians, and flags from Treasurer Jim Chalmers that the Federal Budget will have a greater focus on measuring progress more effectively by including measures of wellbeing – so called [wellbeing budgets](#).

We are looking forward to working collaboratively and productively with the new Health Minister and his team and will be part on the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce, led by Minister Butler.

The Taskforce was announced just before the election, and [the intention in the briefing is clear](#) – concrete action and concrete steps. The taskforce will determine priorities the government should take to remedy the multitude of crises brewing in the health care system. It spells out improved patient access to GPs, with afterhours access, GP-led multidisciplinary teams

including nursing and allied health, improving affordability, management of ongoing health conditions and decreasing pressure on hospitals.

The time for reform in primary healthcare is long overdue. Despite some modest measures over decades, failure to undertake the necessary policy and funding reforms has left Australia's primary health care system and its workforce severely weakened and in some cases at risk of collapse.

In May, CHF co-convoked a [Primary Health Care Leaders' Summit](#) with the PHN Co-operative (includes all 31 Primary Health Networks), attended by 200 health policy leaders with representatives from the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

There is strong and broad support across the sector for the government to take action quickly and decisively in implementing the reforms to ensure that our primary health care system is sustainable, effective and meets the needs of patients across the nation.

Three out of ten health care consumers in Australia are worried about whether they can afford their health care, shown in research drawn from the Consumer Sentiment survey as analysis progresses. This article: [Great health system, but I can't afford it](#), published in MJA InSight+ in May discusses affordability. CHF will continue to work with academic partners to support and advocate for consumers as dynamics in the health system change and evolve.

The latest Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) report for March released last week, [revealed record profits for insurers](#) – over double that of the previous year. We [made the point that](#) as premiums continue to rise, health insurers are making good profits, but consumers are losing out, and losing faith that their private health insurance products are serving their purpose. We are calling for an independent review of Private Health Insurance through the Productivity Commission. Private Health Insurance is a critical component of Australia's health system and Australians deserve an overall health system that works for them.

We surveyed [Australia's Health Panel last month](#), and asked consumers about their experiences with the recent trend of patients are funding their hospital and specialist treatment privately, -- either from savings, loans or drawing down on their superannuation. The results show that consumers are seeing less value in private health insurance, and prefer to take the risk, should they need treatment by self-funding, rather than pay private health insurance premiums.

Last week, we hosted a webinar with Australian National University Institute of Communication in Health Care. In this webinar, Professor Diana Slade presented her work on clinical error at handover transitions, Professor Carmel Crock, Maureen Williams and Dr Mary Dahm discuss how patient safety and good communication go hand in hand for better patient outcomes and Professor Imogen Mitchell talks about end-of-life conversations. You can [see the replay here](#). Our next webinar will be on automated decision making and artificial intelligence (AI) in health – [register here](#)

REGISTER

Leanne Wells
Chief Executive Officer



HELP AUSTRALIANS MAKE HEALTHIER CHOICES

**THE FRUIT
& VEGETABLE
CONSORTIUM**

CHF

Complete this survey and
help reserchers learn how
to encourage families to
make healthier food choices

Eating for better health

We are partnering with the [Fruit and Vegetable Consortium](#) (of Nutrition Australia) to learn about how people buy and eat vegetables.

This survey asks you about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on you and your family's vegetable consumption.

Your answers will help us understand the barriers people face to eating more vegetables. It will help us make recommendations to the Minister for Health and the Government about what people need to improve their, and their families', overall health and wellbeing by eating more vegetables.

Contact **Tammy Wolffs, Senior Policy Officer** (t.wolffs@chf.org.au) if you have any questions

[DO THE SURVEY](#)

NEWS AND UPDATES



What is digital health interoperability - and how do we get a digitally connected health care system?

What is digital health interoperability - and how do we get a digitally connected health care system?

In our research on consumer experiences with new digital health innovations, a constant theme is dissatisfaction from not being able to share or access relevant health information with their health care providers.

For people who have multiple healthcare providers, this causes real frustration, and concern around quality and safety of care. Consumers consistently find it perplexing and frustrating that at each encounter with a provider they must repeat their health story repeatedly.

Interoperability is the way computer software systems can connect and communicate with each other. In healthcare, it is the ability of different information technology systems and software applications (programs) to communicate and exchange data.

It means creating a connected health system so that consumers can share their clinical data with their health care service providers as they move across the health system, often in different care settings.

[READ MORE](#)



Medicines and brand names explained

Most medicines have two different names – an active ingredient and a brand name. There may also be more than one brand of the same medicine. Read more to find out how to identify the differences in your medicines.

[EXPLORE](#)

Palliative Care Consumers and Carers Wanted

People with a lived experience of palliative care services are impacting policy, projects and research.

Come and join them....

The National Register of Palliative Care Consumers and Carers is expanding and managed by Palliative Care Australia (PCA) and accessed by Government, researchers and policy developers to ensure the consumer and carer voices are driving health systems.

PCA is eager to hear from:

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Parents and carers who's child or young person has or is receiving palliative care.

This group gets training and support to represent Australian service users and impact health policy, projects and research for improvements services for quality of life.

Applications close on **30 June 2022**.

Find more on the National Register of Palliative Care Consumers and Carers and to get an Application Pack, please contact pca@palliativecare.org.au or call 02 6232 0700.

PALLIATIVE CARE AUSTRALIA

WEBINAR

CHF Talks

Consumers shaping health
WEBINAR SERIES

CHF
Consumers Health
Forum of Australia



Automated decision making and artificial intelligence in health

Partnering with the University of New South Wales to bring you an informed discussion on artificial intelligence in health. More details coming soon

REGISTER



The role of health communication in patient safety and quality of care

Communication in health care is a major quality and safety issue. Every day in Australian hospitals, miscommunication causes avoidable critical incidents - patients die, are harmed or receive the wrong treatment because of ineffective communication, for example during handovers or diagnosis.

Consumers Health Forum (CHF) and the Australian National University (ANU) Institute for Communication in Health Care (ICH) are co-hosting this webinar on the role of communication in health care and patient safety.

[WATCH THE REPLAY](#)

PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Do you see harmful products like alcohol, gambling, and unhealthy food advertised online?

We want to hear from you!

fare  VicHealth



Online marketing of alcohol, gambling and unhealthy food and beverages.

[FARE Australia](#) and VicHealth are conducting a short community survey to collect community voices on the issue of online marketing for products that are harmful to the health and wellbeing of our community.

The survey will collect views on the online marketing of alcohol, gambling and unhealthy food and beverages, and the team want to hear from community members who are most impacted by these products.

The results from the survey will support ongoing policy and advocacy work around online marketing of harmful products in Australia.

Please sharing the survey with your networks to help prompt community responses to the survey. A stakeholder [kit is available here](#).

The survey is open to people aged 18 and over and will be open until 19 June 2022.

More [information is available here](#)

If you have any questions contact Dr Aimee Brownbill, Senior Policy and Research Advisor on email aimee.brownbill@fare.org.au

[DO THE SURVEY](#)



Australia's Health Panel



Get your patient experience into the policy discussion

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.

We invite you to encourage family and friends to have a say on the pressing issues in healthcare by [joining the panel](#).

Find out more about what you said - on the [preventative health strategy](#), [COVID vaccine passports](#) and [consumers participating in research](#) - [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

[Consumers Health Forum welcomes the new Minister for Health and calls for more action on Primary Health Care](#)

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...1 Jun 2022 — Media release

[Profits for health insurers are sky rocketing, but consumers still lose out](#)

We are again calling for an independent review of private health insurance as the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) report for March released yesterday, reveals record profits for insurers. Premiums rates, which many consumers increasingly struggle to meet,... 26 May 2022 — Media release

[Election 2022: some health reform inroads, but not enough](#)

The major parties could do more to improve access to health care for all Australians with an ambitious, forward-looking overall plan for health reform, the Consumers Health Forum said today. In the Consumers Health Forum's Scorecard on the major Parties' health policies, Community health and...16 May 2022 — Media release

[Letting the people have a voice in health care](#)

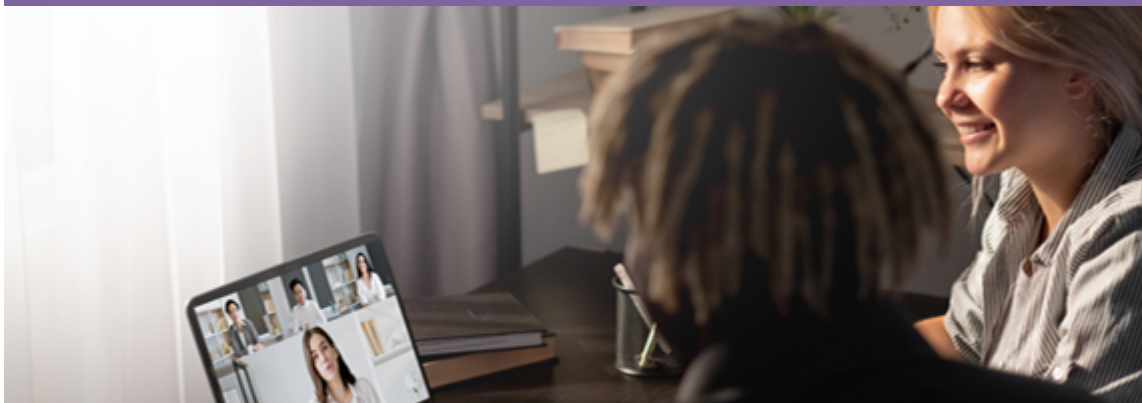
Over the past two years, Australians have become acutely aware of the impact of changing health policies, requirements and advice have had on their daily lives as we have battled the Covid-19 pandemic. We have witnessed first-hand the stresses on the health and aged care systems, whether it's the...9 May 2022 — Blog

[Parties promise to lower healthcare costs, but primary health care reform is missing in action](#)

We welcome recent announcements from both major parties that the cost of prescriptions will be eased by reducing the PBS co-payment. In addition, both parties have committed to raising the threshold for access to the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC). Consumers...5 May 2022 — Media release

[READ ALL MEDIA RELEASES & OPINION](#)

CHFTalks webinar series



[Watch webinar replays](#)

- 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

7B/17 Napier Close,
Deakin ACT 2600

02 6273 5444

info@chf.org.au

[Unsubscribe](#)

