

Consumers Shaping Health

CHF
Consumers Health
Forum OF Australia



News and views on health consumer issues - March 2022



Digital health is about to upend health care – are we ready?

The week just gone could not have taken a more serious toll on the anxiety of Australians emerging from the restrictions of the two-year COVID-19 crisis. The devastating flooding in the Eastern States has hurt farmers and food production, thousands of people who have lost property or found their homes are unliveable, and in some cases the lives were lost. Roads, food and medical supplies, power and internet services have been disrupted or damaged. Even as we focus on the needs at home, in Europe, a serious war has erupted, with implications for years to come.

With such unusual instability, it is even more important to focus on building sustainable and robust healthcare systems. Demands on health services, and mental health services need to withstand troubled times, as we have learned through recent bushfires and a crippling pandemic.

With that in view, an important [White Paper, Australia's Health Reimagined](#), was released last week. It is the culmination of a year's work on a Digital Health CRC project, delivered jointly by Deloitte Australia, Curtin University and CHF.

Subtitled "*The journey to a connected and confident consumer*", the report prescribes pathways and potential pitfalls to a digitally enabled future health system.

The policy implications of the findings are broad and create opportunity as we contemplate our health system 'recovery' post COVID. While there is strong support for virtual health, groups with the most to gain, struggle with the uptake. Education background a standout separator of individuals' use of digital health.

Analysis of Australia's projected healthcare needs show a dramatic increase on the demands in the workforce over the next thirty years, and without significant change in strategy and planning, our future health system will fail us. We need to plan for more hospital beds, and how we attract and pay more staff – or how those limited staff hours can be better leveraged through technology.

The project set out to address four aims:

- Enhancing consumer experience
- Improving population health and health equity
- Reducing costs and providing better value
- Improving the worklife of healthcare providers

The current healthcare system continues to struggle to overcome barriers to healthcare for people facing the challenges of poverty, being Indigenous, or residing in remote Australia.

Digital revolution in healthcare is lagging behind other sectors such as travel and media, but the upheaval is all but upon us, and it is vital we don't allow an unmanaged path of disruption, further fragment healthcare for Australians

The report outlines the transformation the health system requires to meet the need of individuals over the next ten years and breaks these into three horizons.

The horizons identify possible trajectories Australia's healthcare could take under a range of conditions and are intended to prevent an unplanned, and haphazard result emerging out of need without vision. Connected and confident consumers are the goal, and the whitepaper steps out challenges and opportunities.

The outcomes of the Research were presented to CHF stakeholders in a [#CHFTalks webinar in Dec 2021](#).

On a more qualitative level, a [Rural, Regional and Remote Roundtable on Health Services Access](#) was held as a virtual event on 1 Dec 2021. The roundtable was hosted by CHF and the National Rural Healthcare Alliance (NRHA), and the ensuing report was also published last week

CHF Special Interest Groups (SIGs), volunteer groups of consumer health leaders, are an additional way to involve members and consumer representatives in shaping policy and advocacy. The Rural and Remote SIG instigated the roundtable, seeking to drive consumer-led consumer-focused solutions to issues identified outside metro areas.

Partnering with the NHRA, we were able to bring together rural consumers and experts across a range of medical and allied health disciplines.

Participants discussed issues that made the most significant health challenge facing rural and remote communities – the equity of access to affordable, quality treatment and services.

Roundtable participants thought about digital health strategies, while acknowledging the increasing uptake, found that digital healthcare was still confusing for both providers and consumers.

There was a lack of confidence around technology and the lack of consistency in online platforms which created anxiety. They wanted to see a more person-focused rather than tech focussed approach to health system design.

The roundtable stimulated creative thinking and proved to be constructive with reasonable, realistic ideas to combat enduring and deep-seated problems in rural areas. The report lists a series of solutions and ten recommendations.

On both fronts, consumers, researchers, healthcare workers and analysts are putting their heads together with visionary answers to vital questions. It is up to us all to communicate that vision and see it go into policy.

Leanne Wells
Chief Executive Officer



NEWS AND UPDATES

First COVID-19 pill funded through PBS

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) announced in February approval of a new oral treatment for COVID-19 to be subsidised for people in certain high-risk groups through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). The PBAC recognised the need for expedited consideration when they approved an anti-viral treatment, molnupiravir (Lagevrio®), for treating patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 who are at risk of developing severe disease requiring hospitalisation.

Currently the high risk groups include people who are over 65, immunocompromised or ATSI, who have additional high-risk factors - including 0 - 1 vaccinations.

[READ THE RECOMENDATION](#)



Conquering COVID vaccine hesitancy

CHF, supported by the Department of Health, produced a training package last month for GPs, practice nurses and pharmacists in primary care settings to help address vaccine hesitancy.

We partnered with public health and medical advisers, story-telling experts, an illustrator and a videographer to design resources to use with vaccine hesitant patients. The resources demonstrate the [shared decision making](#) model used in clinical practice.

"It's worth the shot" features sets of cards as conversation starters for health care professionals to engage with patients who are uncertain about vaccination or having booster shots.

The package includes [videos with a role-play](#), demonstrating techniques for conversations with patients and how to use the cards. The videos are individualised for GPs and General Practice, pharmacists and practice nurses.

The original project was devised as community-led conversations in regional and rural settings where vaccination uptake was not optimal.

The project was repurposed for health professionals and will be offered to providers throughout Australia through a mix of dissemination channels.

[VIEW THE RESOURCES](#)



#CHFtalks Consumer Assessors – improving healthcare and service outcomes

In this webinar, we look at the role of consumers as assessors in accreditation.

You will hear from current consumer assessors and key leaders in the Australian Council of Healthcare Standards (ACHS).

All Australian health service organisations are required to be accredited under eight standards that provide a nationally consistent statement about the level of care consumers can expect from health services. Partnering with Consumers is one of the standards.

Find out more about how you can be involved, including training and support options.

You will also hear

- what the accreditation process involves
- the roles and responsibilities of assessors
- how consumers can become assessors

Hosted by CHF and ACHS

[REGISTER](#)



Latest COVID information

- Symptoms of [COVID-19 and when to seek medical help](#)
- Treating [COVID-19 symptoms at home](#)
- Medications for [treating COVID-19](#)
- How to prepare a kit to [manage COVID-19 at home](#)
- Where to get an [approved Rapid Antigen Test \(RAT\)](#) and [how to use one](#)
- [What to do if you have COVID](#) easy guide and [Fact Sheet](#)
- When should you have a vaccination if you have [had COVID-19](#)
- Information for before your [vaccination](#)
- Stakeholder kit for [multicultural communities](#);
- 24 hour COVID [helpline from Healthdirect](#) (1800 020 080)
- Visit the RACGP guide to [managing COVID-19 at home](#)



Medicines and brand names, explained

Did you know that 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 - from [NPS MedicineWise](#)

FOR MORE

Free webinar - managing the long term health consequences of COVID-19

In this free webinar from the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association, you can hear from world-leading health experts as they look at the hospital experience of Long COVID in Israel; examine the likely burden and health system impacts of Long COVID and post-COVID illness in Australia and discuss the development of Australian evidence-based clinical guidelines for Long COVID.

When

Date: Wednesday 23rd March
Time: 6.30 - 8.00pm

REGISTER

PARTICIPATE

Check-back – Consumer Insights Workshop - Expression of Interest

Health Issues Centre is hosting a workshop to better understand how Check-back could make a difference in the health journey of people with long-term health conditions and their carers.

Check-back is a new online resource that gives health service users the tools to leave a health appointment confident that they understand and can remember what a health worker has told them.

The workshop will involve a small group of participants who:

- Live with a long-term health condition or who care for someone with a long-term health condition
- Are interested in trialling the Check-back module at www.checkback.org
- Feel open to sharing their insights in a two-hour online workshop with the view to help more people access this new resource.

People from a diverse range of backgrounds with varied experiences are encouraged to apply. Expressions of interest close Sunday 13th February.

Workshop details:

Tuesday **March 29th 2022, 10.00am – 12.00pm** via Zoom.

Reimbursement will be provided to participants.

With funding from Safer Care Victoria

[APPLY NOW](#)



Have your say about 'Cosmetic Surgeons'

Do you have an opinion about the use of the term 'cosmetic surgeon'?

In response to the October 2021 ABC 4 Corners exposé titled Cosmetic Cowboys, the Victorian Department of Health is taking the lead in running a national survey on the use of the title 'surgeon' including 'cosmetic surgeon'.

They want to hear opinions from individuals, including those with personal experiences, to understand if the term causes confusion or potential harm to the public.

We strongly encourage those who have had personal experiences of cosmetic surgery or cosmetic surgeons to complete the survey.

The survey is open until 1 April.

You can fill in the survey here: [Cosmetic Surgery Consultation - Phase 1 | QuestionPro Survey](#)

Email **Dr Penelope Bergen** on p.bergen@chf.org.au for more information.

Participate in research



Self Financed Private Health

As the costs of living in modern Australia continue to rise while wages stagnate, consumers' financial decisions in all areas of their lives are being put under increasing pressure including health and healthcare.

A recent trend that has been reported is the use of “self-financing” in the private healthcare system, where consumers without private health insurance elect to get treatment in private health facilities and pay for the entire cost themselves. Often with the use of “Buy Now, Pay Later” providers such as AfterPay or Zip Pay which have emerged in recent years.

For the March 2022 Australia’s Health Panel survey we want to find out what YOU think about this recent trend and if you’ve had any experiences with it.

[DO THE SURVEY](#)

Cancer Experience Survey Study - University of Sydney

To help researchers understand the challenges of people undergoing or recovering from cancer treatment, and how best to support them using technology; participants need to complete a 25-minute online survey.

Professor Julie Redfern and her team from the University of Sydney are working on a research study on cancer experience.

The survey will cover the types of support people wish they had during and after cancer treatment and ways people want to receive this support eg text messages, mobile applications, or websites etc.

The survey will take 25 minutes of your time

If you have a previous or current diagnosis of breast, prostate, lung, colorectal, or ovarian cancer, please consider taking part. The survey does not require your name or any identifiable information, so a responses are completely anonymous. It is open to people over 18, living in Australia and you need to have sufficient English proficiency to complete the survey.

[DO THE SURVEY](#)

Survey for project about improving hospital discharge for carers and older adults

Researchers from Monash University are seeking at least 30 carers of older adults living in the community to take part in a survey.

The research project aims to identify carers' experiences and needs in supporting older adults who are discharged from hospital to home. The survey is available online or in hardcopy format.

It will take about 25 minutes to complete.

To take part, carers will:

- Be supporting an older adult living in the community with chronic health difficulties,
- Have experience with discharge from hospital to home following admission for a physical health problem of the older adult that they support at any time after 1st January 2020

All carers are very welcome including those from diverse cultural backgrounds, diverse sexual orientation, and diverse locations such as rural and regional areas.

Please contact Jacqui Allen on 0427 940 794 or by email Jacqui.allen@monash.edu for more information

[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](#)

COVID-19 vaccine rollout



Information from the Australian Department of Health

Use the Department of Health's [Clinic Finder](#) to book your your COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccine [information in your language](#)

ATAGI advice on [vaccinating children](#) 5 - 11 years

The [Omicron variant](#)

The COVID-19 [restriction checker](#) from *healthdirect* is a search tool to help you find the restrictions in your state or territory as advice changes about COVID-19.

Advice from ATAGI about the [use of the AstraZeneca vaccine](#) during an outbreak.

COVID-19 news and media updates [from the Dept of Health](#)

Find the [answers to your questions](#) from medical experts.

Use the Department of Health page on [COVID-19 vaccinations](#) to access priority resources including videos and social media campaigns.

You can visit [Healthdirect](#) or see your doctor for medical advice.

FOR MORE

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

[Out of pocket health care costs for treatment and medicines hurting Australians](#)

The poorest and sickest Australians are those who most need healthcare, yet they are missing out due to the combined forces of variable bulk-billing rates and high out-of-pocket costs according to a report from the Grattan

Institute released this week. Australia's healthcare is designed to ensure...
8 Mar 2022 — Media release

[The future of healthcare in Australia: designed for consumers, enabled by digital, accessible for all](#)

The future of healthcare in Australia: designed for consumers, enabled by digital, and accessible for all 70% of Australians are willing to use virtual healthcare services, and 80% are ready to share their health data in a digitally enabled health system. These are some of the findings of a survey ...
2 Mar 2022 — Media release

[Consumers offering solutions to accessing rural health care](#)

A specialised roundtable discussion with rural health consumers has resulted in recommendations to help address gaps in accessing health services in rural, regional and remote Australia. Ten recommendations in a Report published this week ...
1 Mar 2022 — Media release

[Changes of a lifetime we need in our health care](#) - CHF's 2022 election platform

The once in a lifetime impact of the COVID pandemic demands a life-changing response in national health policy, the Consumers Health Forum says. "Political leaders on all sides must respond to the unprecedented strains on our health system by embarking on fundamental ...
22 Feb 2022 — Media release

[Changes of a lifetime we need in our health care](#) CHF's 2022 election platform

The context for this election is like none previously experienced by most Australians. It comes at a time when an already straining health system, in need of fundamental reform and restructure, is grappling with a deadly pandemic that disproportionately affects the...
21 Feb 2022 — Blog

[READ ALL MEDIA RELEASES & OPINION](#)

CHFTalks webinar series

Covering COVID: media in the age of the pandemic

How well has the media handled the demands of reporting on and analyzing the biggest pandemic in a century? What have we learnt?

Hear from researchers, and journalists, including Professor Kerry McCallum, Dr Norman Swan and Dr Sanjaya Senanayake in a discussion about trust in the news, how COVID has impacted health literacy and how the Australian media landscape is holding up.

[WATCH THE REPLAY](#)

A primer on Primary Health Care reform

Ever wondered what's wrong with the Australian Health Care system? If it were up to you - what what YOU do to fix it.

Learn about Primary Health Care reform in this webinar with GP and PHN Board member, Dr Michael Wright, Pharmacist and Senior Lecturer at Curtin, Dr Fei Sim and CEO, National Rural Health Alliance and Leanne Wells CEO, Consumers Health Forum

[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 during COVID-19

[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](#).

What to do if you have COVID-19

- Isolate immediately for at least 7 days
- Let your contacts — friends, family, work – know
- Look after yourself — stay hydrated and take over-the-counter medications if needed
- Monitor your symptoms — [know what to expect from mild](#) COVID-19
- If you're worried about your symptoms use the [COVID-19 Symptom Checker](#)
- If you are symptomatic on day 6, get tested before leaving isolation.
- Visit the RACGP guide to [managing COVID-19 at home](#)

[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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