

Consumers Shaping Health

CHF
Consumers Health
Forum OF Australia



News and views on health consumer issues - October 2021



Photo by Ibrahim Razzan (Unsplash)

Diving deep into high level strategy to help consumers get the best from their healthcare

This week sees submissions close on two major fronts: the Review of the National Medicines Policy (NMP) and the future strategic directions for the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).

Designing policy for the good health of Australians is not for the faint hearted and you'd have to say it suits policy wonks, but the involvement of consumers in this work is vital to a sustainable and fair health system in Australia that we can all be proud of.

Nothing can be more important to illness treatment, management and recovery as access to affordable, evidence-based medicines. In the 1980s and 90s CHF led the advocacy for an NMP. It has guided the use of medicines since 1990 when it was developed by the Australian Pharmaceutical Council, and aims to improve health outcomes for all Australians through their access to, and the wise use of medicines.

The Review sets out to examine how the pharmaceutical and prescribing landscape has changed in the intervening years, and whether the Policy meets the demands of its intended purpose; to provide timely access for Australians to affordable medicines.

It is pitched as a high-level activity to reaffirm or refresh the objectives and principles.

Stakeholders have been invited to discuss how the Policy will adapt to innovation and how the role of consumers can be strengthened and supported. Other considerations are whether the scope of the Policy should be expanded to include health technologies, how relationships with partners are managed, and how to include evaluation steps into the Policy.

In our submission, CHF will stress the need to strengthen diverse consumer involvement in the Policy, particularly its governance and oversight. We will call for strengthened health literacy principles; an implementation, monitoring and accountability framework which includes an annual forum resulting in regular review report cards to measure impact; and the need to strengthen principles around investing in researchers and research.

Next steps are the publication of the Draft Review and a stakeholder forum to review the work. We will continue to keep you included with [updates to this information webpage](#).

Further afield, CHF attended a by-invitation Roundtable where the focus was on priorities for medical research. The [MRFF is the dominant source of funding](#) for medical and health research in Australia. Its priorities are determined by the [Australian Medical Research Advisory Board](#) which initiated the consultation. The Priorities take into account the burden of disease in Australia and how to deliver practical benefits from the available allocated funding.

In our submission for the [MRFF 2021- 2026 strategy and priorities](#), CHF is focusing on advocating for embedding social contexts (such as social determinants) and environmental contexts into the areas where the MRFF identifies missions, sets priorities and approves funding. We are explaining how Consumer and Community Engagement (CCE) must be meaningfully embedded in all aspects of the strategy and guide the MRFF into a more fully inclusive consumer consultative process. We are also calling for the scope of relevant costs to explicitly cover the full cost of research, including indirect costs.

Aside from identifying targeted research topics and securing funding for projects, researchers also struggle to make connections with enough people to participate in clinical trials. It's not that Australians don't want to contribute to vital medical research, the problem lies in connecting researchers to a pool of suitable participants. Without the valuable input of patients and healthy participants, projects can fail to complete the requirements. Next week, our friends from the George Institute will be explaining more about the Join Us Register [in this webinar](#) on *Health consumers as partners in research*.

Leanne Wells
Chief Executive Officer



WEBINAR: Join Us – health consumers as partners in research

Health and medical research has never been more important in Australia. Whether that be research into COVID-19, research that uncovers life-saving treatments for common chronic conditions or studies shedding light on serious rare diseases.

Most Australians say they would be willing to participate in health and medical research, but very few are ever invited.

One of the key barriers to making advances in medicine is the challenge of finding enough people to take part in studies.

Join us on Tues 12 Oct 1:00 pm (AEDT) for this webinar

REGISTER

CHF Board - nominations are open

CHF Voting Members are advised that the call for nominations for CHF Board Directors has been released. Nominations close Wednesday 27 October 2021 (5.00 pm AEDT).

For further information about membership or who is entitled to vote on behalf of your organisation, please contact **Kate Lyttle, Executive Officer**, CHF on k.lyttle@chf.org.au



How communities help bring vaccinations to the bush

Former nurse and midwife in outback South Australia, Christine Wakelin brings an in-depth grasp of health issues in the bush.

She has lived and worked for many years with husband Barry on a farm, 23 kms from the town of Kimba, a town which has been without a local general practitioner for some years.

Even despite the relatively remote location of the community in the Kimba region, Christine, or Tina as she is widely known, says access to the COVID vaccinations has been good.

FOR MORE



National Obesity Prevention Strategy

You are invited to contribute to the CHF response to the Government's draft National Obesity Prevention Strategy.

The draft strategy is [available here](#).

Please [register here to add your voice](#) to the CHF response. You can also contact Tammy Wolffson t.wolffs@chf.org.au if you have any questions or to send your views if you cannot attend the consultation.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

RACGP Ethics Committee - lay person role

The Royal College to GPs are seeking a Lay Person for the National Research and Evaluation Ethics Committee. You're invited to express your interest in membership of the RACGP National Research and Evaluation Ethics Committee (NREEC). Closes 10 October 2021

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Launch of Primary and Community Healthcare Standards

You are invited to the online launch of Australia's first safety and quality standards for primary and community health care.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care is releasing the National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards following extensive consultation with consumers, healthcare providers and services, professional and peak bodies, Primary Health Networks and other representatives of the sector.

Hear from guest speakers during a 45-minute webcast on how the new standards will benefit patients and consumers, why healthcare services should implement them and next steps for accreditation. The event will be hosted by SBS presenter Janice Petersen.

When: Tuesday 12 October, 1:00pm - 1:45pm (AEDT)

[REGISTER](#)

[Participate in research](#)



Help with research - take a 5 minute survey

Are you someone that has a heart condition? Has your heart health been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? Has the pandemic and the social restrictions and guidelines made it more difficult to see your doctor?

Researchers from The University of Sydney are conducting a 5-minute survey for people with heart condition(s). Three \$50-giftcards will be given away. Please click the following weblink to find out more about the study

[FOR MORE](#)

Consumer opportunity: Clinical guidelines for the management of whiplash-associated disorders (Kolling Institute)

Researchers from the Kolling Institute at Royal North Shore Hospital, Sydney, are currently collaborating with the NSW State Insurance Regulatory Authority to develop national clinical guidelines for the management of whiplash-associated disorders.

As part of the project, they are seeking a consumer representative to be a part of the guidelines working group. They are looking for a health consumer representative with whiplash or chronic pain background to provide a consumer voice when developing the guidelines.

If you are interested in being part of the guideline development team, please contact **Dr Christopher Papic** via email chris.papic@sydney.edu.au or call 0421 519 172.

Australia's Health Panel



What is Australia's Health Panel?

Australia's Health Panel is an interactive platform dedicated to collecting the views of Australians about the state of the nation's healthcare system. This information is used

to inform our advocacy.

Find out more about what you said - on loneliness, the vaccine rollout, the preventative health strategy and health literacy - [See the results](#) or [Join the Panel](#)

MORE ABOUT AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH PANEL

COVID-19 vaccine rollout



Information from the Australian Department of Health

Use the Department of Health's [Eligibility Checker](#) to find out when and where to get your COVID-19 vaccine.

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.

Local outbreaks of COVID-19 and the delta variant

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

Events



Anti-poverty week 17 - 23 October

Poverty affects far too many Australian children and families, diminishing their lives now and in the future.

As one of the wealthiest countries in the world, it's just not right that 1 in 6 of our children grow up in poverty. In 2021 we are again supporting the [Raise the Rate for Good](#) and [Everybody's Home](#) campaigns. Here's some actions you can take: [Sign the petition](#) which calls on the PM to support more social housing for women and children fleeing violence and host your own activity. See the [2021 website](#) for more or contact Toni Wren at ed@antipovertyweek.org.au

FOR MORE



Video monitoring of hand hygiene compliance, friend or foe. What are your thoughts?

Hand hygiene is the most important thing a healthcare worker (HCW) can do to prevent a patient from getting an infection. Auditing of HCW's hand hygiene practices is required in all public healthcare facilities in Australia.

Researchers from the University of Sydney want to explore the attitudes of healthcare consumers to the potential use of the novel video-based monitoring system for auditing healthcare workers' hand hygiene practices. You have been invited to participate in this part of the study because you are a member of CHF.

The study has two components:

1. [Online survey](#)
2. [Interview](#)

You can participate in either or both. For questions about this study, contact Katherine McKay at kmck4637@uni.sydney.edu.au.

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

Participate in research



Monash University's Cancer Research Program (CRP) CONSUMER ADVISORY GROUP - RECRUITMENT

Monash University's Cancer Research Program (CRP) is seeking passionate individuals to join their Consumer Advisory Group (CAG) who wish to make informed

contributions to the improvement of the quality of care for patients with cancer.

If this is you, and you have had an experience with cancer as a patient and/or carer, then we would like to hear from you!

To apply for this role please fill in an [Expression of Interest form](#). For further information please visit the Program's website.

FOR MORE



Join Us - call for research stories

Join Us connects researchers with people who are willing to be involved in research, and helps researchers prevent, treat and find cures for disease.

It's quick and simple – you sign up, provide a few details that are held in a secure database and when a relevant study comes up, you are asked if you'd like to take part. By joining us you could help change a life. Together we can change millions of lives.

JOIN US REGISTER

Media releases and editorial

[How COVID times guide our future medicines policy](#)

The National Medicine Policy Review now underway comes at an opportune, if bitter-sweet, time. .. 1 Oct 2021 — Blog

[How communities help bring vaccinations to the bush](#)

As a former general nurse and midwife in outback South Australia, Christine Wakelin brings an in-depth grasp of health issues in the bush.. 27 Sept 2021 — Blog

[Health consumers as agents of change](#)

Australia's health system is no longer fit for purpose and central to the fundamental changes needed should be a shift towards a more wellness-focused ... 17 Sept 2021 — Blog

[Safe and respectful childbirth theme for WPSD2021](#)

On World Patient Safety Day the World Health Organization seeks to raise global awareness on the issues of maternal and newborn safety... 16 Sept 2021 — Media release

[Vaccinating our way back to freedom](#)

Kellie O'Callaghan has had her two COVID vaccinations, not only because of her own health conditions but also because she is an active member of her community in Gippsland,... 9 Sept 2021 — Blog

READ ALL MEDIA RELEASES & OPINION

CHF Talks webinar series

Building a better medicines policy

Hear from the Chair of Expert Advisory Panel, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Michael Kidd, Consumer Advisor, Jan Donovan and CEO of Medicines Australia, Liz de Somer on they hope for the Review of the National Medicines Policy.

[WATCH THE REPLAY](#)

Digital inclusion: Equity in health & wellbeing

In this webinar we hear from digital inclusion specialists, the Good Things Foundation, to discuss the critical role of digital inclusion in ensuring better health and wellbeing. We'll hear about the groups that are at greatest risk of exclusion in Australia, and of broadening health inequities, and about programs that work to close the digital divide.

[WATCH THE REPLAY](#)

Living Evidence and Consumers

In this panel discussion, presenters who have been working on the [National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce](#) will share insights about the work they do.

[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](#).

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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