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## It's what consumers wanted: more dollars, real reform

The health reforms announced in tonight's Federal Budget will go a long way towards giving consumers greater access to affordable primary care, according to CHF, the national peak body for health consumers.

CHF, which represented consumers on the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce, welcomed key initiatives including:

- A \$3.5 billion investment to triple the bulk billing incentive, leading to more free GP consultations for children under 16, pensioners and other Commonwealth concession card holders
- An indexation increase to Medicare rebates
- The ability for consumers to buy two months' worth of 300+ medicines on a single trip to the local pharmacy.

"For years, consumers have been telling us they need more access to affordable primary care services. The reforms announced are an excellent start," CHF CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny said.

"Rather than increase the Medicare rebate across the board, these changes incentivise GPs to provide extra care to pensioners and children, as well as those who have high levels of chronic and complex health conditions or socioeconomic disadvantage, at no cost."

CHF also welcomed the government providing \$10.5m (over four years) to help broaden its engagement and support of consumers around Australia.

"This is a win for health consumers who will be supported to have a greater say in the design and implementation of health reforms that affect them," Dr Elizabeth Deveny said.

Some 3000 everyday Australians signed CHF's petition asking the Government to give consumers a greater say in making our primary care system more effective and efficient.

"We asked the Government to listen to consumers and they have done this," Dr Deveny said.

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## Consumers shaping health

“For too long the needs of everyday Australians have been drowned out by lobby groups. Today the tide has turned.

“This government has demonstrated that putting consumers at the centre of health policy and service delivery is now a firm commitment.

“CHF looks forward to working with all parts of the health system to enhance the health and wellbeing of all Australians.”

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