

## **Consumer report card points to highs and lows of the health system**

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A new Consumer Report Card on Australia's Health System finds that significant areas including mental health and cost barriers to care present issues of concern.

The Consumers Health Forum has studied 12 indicators against historical and international measures to report on health system performance from a consumer's perspective.

The report identified six of the 12 indicators as areas "of concern" for consumers. These include relatively high rates of psychological distress compared to other western countries, relatively high level of out-of-pocket health costs and levels public expenditure on preventive health measures.

On the positive side, 85 per cent of Australians consider themselves in good or very good health, and the falling incidence of hospital acquired infections places Australia as the second best-performing nation on that front.

The 12 indicators were used to assess four key elements of the system. These are: population health and wellbeing, consumer-centred care, health system funding and social determinants of health.

The CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said the aim of the report was to provide a picture of Australia's health system performance in key areas from a consumer perspective.

"It is appropriate that we launch the Consumer Report Card today, the start of Patient Experience Week, an opportunity to celebrate the community

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advocates and healthcare staff who impact on the patient experience every day.

“We aim to evolve and regularly publish the Consumer Report Card”.

“There are many data-rich reports published on Australia’s health system but not much in the way of an overall consumer-focused report card on Australia’s health system and outcomes,” Ms Wells said.

“This report on one page identifies where the key areas of concern are, such as the significant numbers of Australians experiencing high levels of psychological stress --- the 6<sup>th</sup> highest rate out of 11 high-income countries.

“In most aspects the Australian health system appears to perform relatively well compared with other countries. One noteworthy aspect where Australia lags is on expenditure on public health measures to reduce the overall burden of disease and keep people well. On latest available measures, Australia’s expenditure is the 29<sup>th</sup> lowest out of 36 countries.

“The Report Card can help highlight where there are data gaps. It shows for instance where no Australian trend data are available in areas including health literacy, consumers’ involvement in their own care, geographic barriers to accessing health care and coordination across health and social services.

“The indicators chosen are all important elements of health and wellbeing for consumers and so their inclusion is still relevant. It is hoped that the publication of the Report Card will encourage availability of more data over time.” Ms Wells said.

View the [Consumer Report Card on Australia’s Health System](#)

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