

COMMUNIQUE: CONSUMER COMMISSION DIVERGENT WORKSHOP 4

13 AUGUST 2020

On 12 August CHF hosted the fourth workshop of our *Consumer Commission: Beyond COVID-19*, which focussed on the topic of digital health. 23 Consumer Commissioners attended the session.

Commissioners were asked to consider the use of digital and virtual care with a future focus, looking across primary care, hospitals, in-home care and prevention. Commissioners were encouraged to think big and go beyond the immediate experience of telehealth during the pandemic to a broader concept of what digital health could look like in the future.

Throughout the workshop Commissioners were divided into breakout groups to discuss four key questions related to digital health and how the COVID-19 pandemic has both encouraged its used and highlighted the digital divide. The key questions discussed were:

- 1. What forms of digital technology that are showing promise during COVID-19 should become permanent features of Australia's healthcare system?
- 2. What barriers need to be addressed to maximise the potential of digital health for the benefit of all Australians?
- 3. What programs or supports are needed to improve digital literacy? Where should these be targeted?
- 4. How should new technologies be made available to consumers?

A summary of the discussion in response to these questions is provided on page 2.



Key themes from the discussions are outlined below:

Positive changes to retain

- Medicare funded Telehealth consults
- Scaled up data and information sharing
- Digital collaboration enables broader consumer engagement
- Culture change digital embraced rather than resisted
- Virtual hospitals e.g. RPAH
- Simple solutions: appointment reminders, online payments etc.
- ePrescriptions, online pathology and diagnostic results
- Videoconferencing for consumer groups and peer support
- Expanded use of social media engagement (learn from mental health)

How to maximise potential of digital

- Reliable internet connection/bandwidth
- Provide low cost access to devices to address digital exclusion
- Demonstrate security of data so consumers can feel confident
- Not a 'one size fits all' solution - fit for purpose and choice still needed
- Address legacy platforms to enable information sharing and interoperability
- Use lived experience to design platforms/ interface that work for consumers
- Training and culture shift for health care workers
- Modernise Medicare so that digital is funded with appropriate models that allow team-based care and broad access.
- Implementation planning led by PHNs

New technologies and digital literacy

- Realtime PROMs and PREMs - evaluate and report publicly
- Culture shift digital access is a right not a luxury, and an investment not a cost
- National strategic plan for people powered digital positioning - broader than health and focussed on areas of need.
- Better health sector communication strategies health and digital literacy are not consumer deficits
- Utilise local government and their services e.g. libraries to support digital literacy and education
- Common supporting platforms that make collaboration and access easier but maintain choice
- Virtual care teams for patients with high needs
- Reliable "source of truth" informed by lived experience
- AI, 3D printing, robotic surgery, remote monitoring