

healthUPdate

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From the CEO



Cheerful tidings for health consumers

(Watch the video version of our [Christmas wrap up here](#))

The year is ending with something of a double Christmas present: two transforming advances for Australia's health consumers — the [announcement of permanent telehealth](#) under Medicare and the release of the [National Preventive Health strategy report](#).

Both have been to a significant extent influenced if not driven by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. So what's new? You might ask. The telling aspect about the COVID role in telehealth and the preventive health strategy however is the significantly differing dynamics involved.

COVID was the stimulus of necessity for telehealth to ensure that necessary access to medical care continued. With the preventive health strategy, it was the instructive role that COVID played in demonstrating the centrality of population health in combating the pandemic. So often the people most vulnerable to COVID were those suffering the chronic conditions which preventive health policies can counter.

The two developments also offer the reality of better meeting consumer access needs, in the case of telehealth, and in the case of the preventive strategy the potential of greater consumer involvement in the shaping of public health measures into the future.

A comment in the strategy report noted: “The COVID pandemic... has shone a light on the circumstances which create unequal vulnerability to illness.” It is noteworthy that among the multiplicity of measures and issue areas covered in the strategy, consumer and community are given a central role.

I was a member of the Expert Steering Committee which advised on the Strategy and it is terrific to see the report support the “importance of consumers and consumer groups being recognised as equal participants in health partnerships, to ensure that prevention systems are person-centred”.

Among the “policy achievements by 2030” foreshadowed in the Strategy are that consumers are informed by a national platform identifying credible, health information, a national health literacy strategy that guides health service improvements including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people with disability and CALD communities, and that the workforce is supported in building the health literacy capacity of themselves and their communities.

How these ideas will translate into action by 2030 will depend on a “Blueprint for Action” to be developed outlining implementation details.

So there are challenges ahead for CHF in working towards the goals of the strategy. But now at least we have a national launch pad for decisive action and investment in prevention.

While telehealth is groundbreaking, it is a downpayment. We eagerly await confirmation of the future direction for primary care reform. The 10 Year Primary Health Care Plan, in development for almost two years involving deep consultation, is yet to hit the airwaves. Both policy platforms are needed.

After a tough two years in health for many Australians, we have grounds for optimism. We at CHF offer to all good health and happiness for the year ahead.

Leanne Wells
Chief Executive Officer





The Youth Health Forum is looking for new young leaders

Young leaders are an integral part of the Forum, they act at the key point of contact for CHF when engaging with young people. They meet with the YHF national coordinator monthly.

This role will run until June 2022 with extensions pending funding, successful candidates will receive remuneration for their work.

Purpose of the role:

To provide strategic oversight and guidance to YHF and CHF as well as to the members of these groups.

- To demonstrate that young people have valuable experiences, contributions and ideas about how to improve youth health.
- To promote the inclusion of diverse young people in national policy discussions and decisions, service design, priority setting in research, and development of resources

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Telehealth locked in for good

The Federal Government has announced it is investing \$308.6 million to strengthen Australia's primary care health system in announcing that telehealth will be a permanent part of Medicare.

Telehealth has been transformational to health care delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic and as part of expanded support for the primary care system, the Government is investing \$308.6 million, including:

- \$106 million for a permanent telehealth for Australian patients
- \$58.8 million to support Australian's mental health with Better Access to vital services
- \$41.2 million to deliver better health services in regional and rural Australia
- \$77 million to improve access to Medicare
- \$25.6 million to support our COVID-19 efforts through Primary Care

[READ MORE](#)



ACCC on health funds COVID profits issue

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has just released [its report](#) into the private health insurance system which refers to various publications released by the Consumers Health Forum, including the [Results of Australia's Health Panel survey on the private healthcare system](#).

The ACCC says many insurers have been implementing their commitments to return profits from COVID-19 restrictions to policyholders, primarily through premium credits or direct payments to policyholders. However, it is concerned some of the statements made by insurers when announcing relief for policyholders may suggest that they are calculating their total profitability from COVID restrictions too conservatively, by reference only to the value of their 'deferred claims liability'.

See [ACCC media release](#) for more.

[ACCC MEDIA RELEASE](#)

Enabling models of digital health care

The draft National Healthcare Interoperability Plan was developed to map a pathway to a more interoperable Australian health system to support the implementation of digitally enabled models of care. The primary goal of interoperability is to support safe, secure, efficient, and quality care in which health information can be seamlessly shared across the health system, with the consent of consumers, between their health providers.

[VIEW SUBMISSION](#)

[CONSULTATIONS AND SURVEYS](#)

Consultation on Australia's 10 Year Cancer Plan

The Government has called for views on designing and delivering a plan for collaborative, coordinated and national action for cancer outcomes and experience.

CHF invites to you to a consultation that will feed back to the Government consumer needs for:

- a focus on prevention
- consumer centred data collection
- access to drug trials
- improving quality of life
- national consistency.

More information about the [Australian Cancer Plan](#)

To help frame your thinking you can [read the Communique](#) and [view presentations](#) from a Ministerial Roundtable about the Australian Cancer Plan held in April 2021.

Stay informed

Information and updates are available on the [Cancer Australia website](#)

Consultation

Date: Wed 19 Jan 2022

Time: 2:00 pm

Please [register to join](#) or contact **Tammy Wolffs** on email t.wolffs@chf.org.au for details.

REGISTER

PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Primary care research invitation

Western Sydney University is inviting primary health consumers to join a research project entitled 'Quality Equity and Systems Transformation in Primary Health Care (QUEST PHC)'. The aim of this research is to develop and test a tool to measure quality of health care in Australian general practice.

Focus groups of Primary Health Care consumers will be asked about these measures, taking up to two hours on-line using Zoom or similar technology.

There is no payment available for participating.

If you have any questions, or to participate in the QUEST PHC project, contact Dr Phyllis Lau on email phyllis.lau@westernsydney.edu.au or Samantha Ryan, email samantha.ryan@westernsydney.edu.au

MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT



Exercise and lung cancer

Which outcomes are important to patients and carers?

Are you a person with lung cancer or the carer of someone with lung cancer? Then researchers from the University of Melbourne would love to talk to you!

Participants are invited to take part in a study exploring which exercise outcomes are important to people with lung cancer and carers of people with lung cancer. The study aims to explore patients' and carers' views and will be used to develop resources for exercise staff who work with people with lung cancer.

What is involved?

People with lung cancer or carers of people with lung cancer are invited to participate in a small group or individual interview that will take approximately 60 minutes and can be done over video connection or phone

Interested?

If you are interested in learning more and would like to participate, please contact Dr Lara Edbrooke by phone: 0400 830 945 or email: larae@unimelb.edu.au or Ms Amy Bowman by email: bowman.a@unimelb.edu.au

Any information provided as part of the study will remain strictly confidential and de-identified in any findings presented as part of this study.

AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH PANEL



Get your patient experience into the policy discussion

Students in healthcare delivery

Today's healthcare students are tomorrow's healthcare practitioners. Students need hands-on experience with consumers to become competent health care professionals.

However little is known about how consumers feel about their role in student education nor how student practitioners affect the consumers healthcare experience. Our survey for December will be "*Students in healthcare delivery*"

We invite CHF members and consumer representatives to encourage their members, family and friends to have a say on the pressing issues in healthcare by [joining the panel](#)

In the meantime, find out more about what panellists said on [private health insurance](#), [covid-19 vaccine passports](#) and [consumers participating in research](#) - [See the results](#)

JOIN AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH PANEL

COVID-19 vaccine



Information on the COVID-19 vaccine

Use the *healthdirect's* [Clinic finder](#) to find out when and where to get your COVID-19 vaccine.

The new [COVID-19 restriction checker](#) is a search tool to help you find what you can or can't do in your state or territory as advice changes about COVID-19.

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.

[Learn how to protect yourself and others - how to stop the spread of COVID](#)

Learn how to [find your vaccination record](#) and [what to do if information is missing](#)

FOR MORE

Media releases and editorial

[Let's work for unity and harmony on COVID this Christmas](#)

The National Cabinet meeting tomorrow must show united leadership now and resolve on concerted action to counter the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, the Consumers Health Forum said today. "The soaring infection figures in several states make it clear this is not the time for relaxation of...21 Dec 2021 — Media release

[Preventive policy charts path to a healthier future](#)

We welcome the National Preventive Health Strategy released today which sets out a positive agenda for a future healthier Australia, backed by the aim to earmark 5 per cent of the health budget for preventive action by 203013 Dec 2021 — Media release

[Telehealth now a permanent part of Medicare](#)

The announcement today assuring telehealth's future as a permanent part of Medicare acknowledges its vital role in enabling access to GPs, specialists and allied health professionals 3 Dec 2021 2021 — Media release

All Media Releases and Editorial

Consumer program



Consumer representative vacancies

CHF nominates consumer representatives to high level committees and

those related to funded priority areas. Calls for nominations are made via *Health Update* and the CHF website. Not all opportunities are advertised due to time limitations or because invitations are targeted due to the specific work or strategic nature of the work.

More information about all the opportunities below can be found on our [Consumer vacancies webpage](#).

If you have any questions, please contact the person listed or alternatively, contact, **Rebecca Edwards**, on email R.Edwards@chf.org.au. Currently the CHF office is closed due to Covid restrictions in Canberra.



RACP Consumer Advisory Group - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative

Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP)

The Consumer Advisory Group, a standing committee representing the broad views of the community in the work of the RACP, is seeking a member with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background or experience. The Consumer Advisory Group complements the work of other College bodies in progressing the RACP Indigenous Strategic Framework.

Travel expenses and sitting fees will be paid. Contact consumers@racp.edu.au

Applications close 28 Jan 2022

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

[SEE ALL CONSUMER REP OPPORTUNITES](#)

Full details of committee vacancies are only accessible on our website by our members and consumer representatives. If you do not have access and would like to apply, please contact Kate Lyttle on 02 6273 5444 or K.Lyttle@chf.org.au.

[BECOME A MEMBER](#)



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