

healthUPdate

04 May 2021 | Issue 7

From the CEO



The path toward permanent telehealth and virtual care

Last week we saw the announcement that Medicare Telehealth services would continue until the end of 2021, and hints that there may be further news in the Federal Budget next month. Some are concerned about the details of the extension, with GPs losing access to temporary MBS items for long telephone consultations. Others have countered that buried in the rebate scheme is a nudge towards incentivising video opposed to phone consultations.

These changes may disadvantage some, particularly those who don't have access to better technology or robust internet connections, but supporters say video consultations are not out of reach for most Australians.

CHF's position is that Australia should invest in digitisation across healthcare and address access barriers such as poor internet access and low digital literacy.

There is no doubt that Telehealth supports treatment and management plans and has considerable benefits when combined with face-to-face consultations.

In the face of serious risk to health by the threat of the pandemic, the pivot to Telehealth has saved lives and allowed continuity of care in helping patients to access their healthcare professionals from the safety of their homes.

Ongoing access to high quality, affordable telehealth and virtual health care is a continuation of the uptake of technology to make healthcare for all consumers more accessible and affordable.

There has been rapid acceleration in the uptake of virtual care. Using the technology that we have all become so familiar with, seems like a “no-brainer,” but to fully manage the integration of technology into our complex healthcare system is another thing altogether.

With this goal, CHF is partnering with the Digital Health CRC, Deloitte Australia and Curtin University in a new project, Reimagining healthcare, which will define priorities to enable virtual and digital capabilities to be embedded into healthcare delivery. The project will examine the impact of government and industry led policy and service delivery, and provide direction anchored in patient experience. The first stage of the project can [be viewed here](#)

Health Consumers NSW have also been busy on this front, gathering patient perspectives on their experiences with Telehealth during the first phase of integration, and forming recommendations based on their analysis. Their report; *Navigating Telehealth: The Patients' Perspective* is available to download, along with a background report on the telehealth landscape. There'll also be a public briefing on Thursday 6 May for further discussion on the report's findings. [Access the reports or register for the briefing.](#)

Leanne Wells
Chief Executive Officer



National COVID-19 vaccine roll out



AstraZeneca vaccine offered to people aged 50+ this week

The vaccination program in Australia is underway with the Department of Health announcing that people over 50 will now be able to receive an AstraZeneca vaccine for COVID-19 at selected vaccination clinics from 3 May and at GP's from 17 May. Check out [this video](#) for more.

The 1a and [part 1b](#) of the program are still progressing. Elderly people over 80

years and not in Aged Care are eligible to receive the AstraZeneca vaccine from their GP.

At CHF, we are committed to ensuring clear, credible and evidence-based COVID-19 vaccination information is available to Australian health consumers. To that end, we are developing our COVID-19 information hub, [Be Health Aware](#) health literacy portal to include a COVID-19 information hub carrying the most recent information. We are working in collaboration with the Department of Health and information we publish is authorised by qualified experts in health communication.

We will be opening an expression of interest application shortly for consumer representatives who, if selected, will act as local community influencers in a vaccine confidence program in regional and rural Australia. A similar program for the rural workforce will be conducted in tandem by the National Rural Health Alliance.

Vaccination will help all Australians combat the virus in coming months. Vaccination is designed to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 and severity of symptoms should you catch the disease. No vaccine is 100% effective, and so you should continue to practice social distancing, hand washing and mask wearing (where necessary), even after you have been vaccinated.

Information on the vaccine

Use the Department of Health's [Eligibly Checker](#) to find out when to get your vaccine.

Find the [answers to your questions](#) from medical experts

Encourage your friends, family and networks to turn to the government-funded, free medical advice service, [healthdirect](#), or their doctor for medical advice.

Use the Dept of Health [page on COVID-19 vaccinations](#) to access priority resources including videos and social media campaigns.

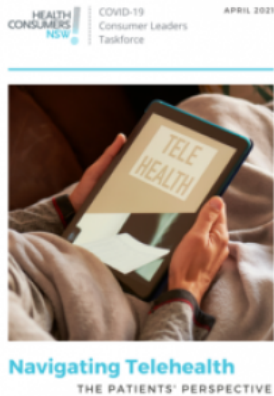
Videos

[How vaccines work](#)

[How will everyone get their vaccination?](#)

[Who will get their COVID vaccine first?](#)

DEPT OF HEALTH INFORMATION ON COVID-19



Navigating Telehealth: the Patients' Perspective

Navigating Telehealth: The Patients' Perspective is a Report which focuses on what patients and families told us about their experiences of using telehealth during 2020, as well as recommendations based on these experiences.

A webinar briefing on the launch of the report will be on **Thursday, 6 May 2021 at 12pm.**

FOR MORE

A purple banner for 'CHF Talks' featuring various medical and health-related icons. The text 'CHF Talks' is in large white font, with 'Consumers shaping health' and 'WEBINAR SERIES' below it. The CHF logo (Consumers Health Forum of Australia) is on the right.

What are “living guidelines” and how are consumers involved?

What's it like to watch your partner, pregnant with twins, ventilated in intensive care with COVID-19? What is long COVID like? Chris, a science communicator & broadcaster has had COVID-19, now he is contributing to the Living Evidence Taskforce.

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.

Each week, more than 250 Taskforce contributors work together to find new research and quickly incorporate that research into national, evidence-based guidelines for the clinical care of Australians with COVID-19.

These are living guidelines, updated with the latest global research in near real-time with trusted, up-to-the minute advice to clinicians providing frontline care. Hear from the team on the findings from this project.

WATCH THE REPLAY



Dr Tari Turner



Dr Eleanor Horton



Chris Lassig

Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation 2021



Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation 2021

The release of the Fourth Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation last week raised questions about the equity and quality of our health system with significant differences in the services provided across geographic and socio-economic areas.

The [report was produced](#) by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care in partnership with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and maps healthcare use across the country, identifying potentially unwarranted variation and areas for healthcare improvement.

It examines 17 items across six clinical topics: early planned births; potentially preventable hospitalisations for chronic disease and infection; ear, nose and throat surgery in children and young people; lumbar spinal surgery; gastrointestinal investigations; and medicines use in older people.

Jennifer Doggart, Croakey News Media, reports on the release and healthcare leaders' responses to the findings.

Guest speaker, Professor John Newnham, highlighted the raising occurrence of preplanned caesarian sections before 39 weeks, and over hospitalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders for common chronic illnesses. Commission's Acting Chief Medical Officer, Professor Ann Duggan, spoke about the unevenness of surgery for ear, nose and throat conditions in children and young adults for across the regions.

Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, Dr Paul Kelly, and the Minister for Health and Aged Care, Greg Hunt responded from the Government.

[READ MORE](#)

Register for NPS MedicineWise national events



National Medicines Symposium (NMS 2021)

This year's NPS National Medicines Symposium (NMS) 2021 will be a virtual event held on **Tuesday 18 May 2021**.

Registration is \$100 and closes on 14th May. Access includes exclusive online networking opportunities, and recordings of the presentations post-event.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Choosing Wisely Australia National Meeting

Empowering consumers to choose wisely.

The Choosing Wisely Australia National Meeting will follow the Symposium on **Wed 19 May 2021**.

Registration is \$100 and closes on 14 May. Access includes networking opportunities and recordings of the presentations post-event.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Australia's Health Panel



Australia's Health Panel

Australia's Health Panel is a way for you to comment on health policy and issues, and offer feedback on trends and discussions.

Join **Australia's Health Panel** and have your say on today's issues in health care. Please share details about Australia's Health Panel with your networks.

See [Australia's Health Panel results](#)

JOIN AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH PANEL



Join Us - the national research register

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

[Ongoing Telehealth drives innovation and gives everyone better access](#)

We welcome the extension of Medicare coverage for telehealth consultations for GPs, allied health and specialists to the end of 2021, ... [MEDIA RELEASE: 27 APR 2021](#)

[Consumer report card points to highs and lows of the health system](#)

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 ... [MEDIA RELEASE: 26 APR 2021](#)

[Learning from consumer experience improves health care](#)

The health system in Australia would benefit significantly by paying more attention to the lessons learned from patient experience ... [MEDIA RELEASE: 15 APR 2021](#)

[All Media Releases and editorial](#)

Consumer program



Consumer Representative Appointments

Congratulations to:

Jo Root, nominated to the Digital Health CRC - Research and Education Board Advisory Committee

Consumer Reports

CHF expects and appreciates reports from CHF nominated consumers. These reports help keep CHF informed of consumer work.

Consumer reports can be made online, via email, mail or phone. CHF thanks the following consumers for keeping us up to date on their work.

Rebecca Edwards, The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health - General Practice Accreditation Coordinating Committee

Dianne Smith, The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health - Primary Care Committee

Dianne Smith, NPS MedicineWise - Choosing Wisely Mentor Program

Dianne Smith, Australasian College for Infection Prevention and Control - ACIPC Board

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 CHF decides to target invitations due to the specific work or strategic nature of the work involved.

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, our Consumer and Member Relationship Coordinator, **Ghislaine Martin**, on 02 6273 5444 or email g.martin@chf.org.au.

Safe Use of Medicine in Older People Expert Working Group

NPS MedicineWise

NPS MedicineWise is an independent, not-for-profit, evidence-based

organisation that aims to improve the quality use of medicines and medical tests to achieve better health outcomes for all Australians.

NPS MedicineWise delivers a number of clinical programs to general practitioners, consumers and other health professionals each year to deliver relevant, timely and practical information regarding medicines and medical tests.

Consumer representation is sought for Expert Working Groups which are formed for each program to provide advice on the design and development. Applications for the NPS MedicineWise - Safe Use of Medicine in Older People Expert Working Group are invited.

Applications close midnight AEST Tuesday 11 May 2021

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

Other consumer opportunities

CHF also advertises consumer opportunities that we do not provide nominations for. The opportunities listed below are for members to work directly with stakeholders and apply to sit on committees that are of interest.

CHF checks that consumer participation is supported with coverage of travel costs and sitting fees before advertising these opportunities.

Blood Synergy Advisory Committee

Monash University

The Blood Synergy is a NHMRC-funded program established to address Australia's national transfusion research priorities. It is a collaborative research program focused on how blood products are used now, and how they can be better used in the future to improve patient outcomes. More information is available on their website: www.bloodsynergy.org.

Consumers and community representatives with lived experience as blood donors and/or blood transfusion recipients are invited to express their interest in joining the Advisory Committee.

Interested consumers with transfusion experience are encouraged to [complete the contact form](#).

For more information, please contact the Blood Synergy Program Manager, Karina Brady, via email at sphpm.bloodsynergy@monash.edu

Applications close midnight AEST Sunday 16 May 2021

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

CMUS-MARC Opioid Workshop Group

Monash University

The Centre for Medicine Use and Safety (CMUS) and the Monash Addiction Research Centre (MARC), Monash University is seeking consumer participation for their research priorities for optimising the safe and effective use of opioids in general practice workshop.

Consumers are invited to contribute to active discussion, to share their experience and to contribute to forming research questions.

Through a structured session, the aim is to promote an interactive and collaborative environment to establish prescription opioid research priority areas, based on the perspective of a range of key multidisciplinary stakeholder's perspectives.

The workshop forms a larger body of research to develop national research priority areas to inform future opioid research at CMUS and MARC.

If interested contact [Helena Cangadis](#) at Monash University at Helena.cangadis-douglass1@monash.edu for an explanatory statement and consent form outlining details of the workshop.

Register your interest before 5.00pm AEST on Tuesday 4 May 2021

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

TEXT4myBACK clinical trial

The University of Sydney

The University of Sydney is seeking consumer participation in a clinical trial, TEXT4myBACK, a text message intervention to support recovery of people with low back pain.

The study will compare two different formats of text messages that provide information about low back pain. It is being conducted at the University of Sydney and carried out entirely remotely.

People who have a current acute episode of back pain (i.e. less than 3 months) who are interested in participating should complete the study [pre-screening survey online](#).

If you meet the inclusion criteria, you will be contacted by the research team who will provide you with more information about the study.

If you participate, you will be asked to complete follow-up online surveys at 3, 6 and 12 months which require around 20-30 minutes of your time.

Expressions of interest close at 12:00 midnight (AEST) on Wednesday 1 December 2021

[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 Ghislaine Martin on 02 6273 5444 or g.martin@chf.org.au.

[BECOME A MEMBER](#)



We sent you this email because you opted to receive this newsletter from the [Consumers Health Forum](#).
[Unsubscribe](#) or email us info@chf.org.au | Tel: 02 6273 5444

