



Consumers Health
Forum OF Australia

Primary Health Care: Special Interest Group

General purpose and operation of the group

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Background

Consumers Health Forum

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) is the national peak body representing the interests of Australian healthcare consumers. CHF works to achieve safe, quality, timely healthcare for all Australians, support by accessible health information and systems.

CHF does this by:

1. advocating for appropriate and equitable healthcare
2. undertaking consumer-based research and developing a strong consumer knowledge base
3. identifying key issues in safety and quality of health services for consumers
4. raising the health literacy of consumers, health professionals and stakeholders
5. providing a strong national voice for health consumers and supporting consumer participation in health policy and program decision making.

CHF has previously had various special interest groups (SIGs) operating at different times. These are informal networks of consumers who have self-selected to work more intensively on policy issues. Each SIG is intended to be informal and therefore CHF believe a 'term of reference' document is not appropriate to outline the purpose and activities of these SIGs. As such, this document has been developed to outline the general purpose and operation of the Primary Health Care SIG.

Primary Health Care reform: development of the 10-Year Primary Health Care Plan

The Australian Government has committed to the development of a 10-Year Primary Health Care Plan. The Plan will set a vision and path to guide future primary health care reform, as part of the Government's Long Term National Health Plan.

CHF CEO Leanne Wells had been appointed to the Primary Health Reform Steering Group which is advising the Health Minister on the development of the Primary Health Care 10-Year Plan. The Steering Group is expected to meet regularly until September 2020. As the first step, the Steering Group will advise on the implementation of the 2019-20 Budget measure to support voluntary patient enrolment for patients aged 70 years and over.

Strong primary health care is central to an efficient, equitable and effective health system, and while Australia has good quality primary care, there are many parts of our system that need to be improved. As CHF's 2018 *Shifting Gears – Consumers transforming health* report noted, Australia faces the problem of managing a rising number of people with multiple chronic conditions or with risk factors for chronic conditions. A significant proportion of acute hospital admissions could have been treated or prevented through management in primary and community settings.

If this trend is not arrested, we will not be able to afford the kind of world class health system we have become accustomed to. The solution is to renew our focus on and investment in preventative health and integrated primary health care in community settings.

CHF has long advocated for a more coordinated, comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to primary health care, including through our 2018 report *Snakes & Ladders: The Journey to Primary Care Integration* which was co-produced with The George Institute for

Global Health and the University of Queensland-MRI Centre for Health System Reform and Integration. CHF will continue to be a leading voice in this area and we are seeking the input of our members and consumer advocates to inform our contributions to this reform process.

Purpose of the Primary Health Care SIG

To date the projects, activities and policy of the CHF have been led and developed by CHF staff and staff of the organisations the CHF has partnered with. However, as the CHF is a strong supporter of consumers shaping health and having meaningful engagement in all areas of the healthcare system, we want to directly involve consumers in our primary health care policy work.

With the SIG established, we hope to have consumers involved in both our input to the development of the 10-Year Primary Health Care Plan and in any other proactive proposals CHF is developing to support more integrated primary health care.

Consumer participants in the Primary Health Care SIG will identify what matters to consumers in primary health care, where improvement can be made and contribute to the cultural changes needed among GPs, nurses, allied health professionals and policy makers that are needed to deliver coordinated, integrated, consumer-centred primary health care. Through this group, CHF hope to provide a space for those interested in primary health care to share information, communicate perspectives and workshop ideas to enact change.

Other opportunities may arise that align with the areas of focus and will be promoted to the group when appropriate.

Operation of the Primary Health Care SIG

The Primary Health Care SIG will influence CHF's positions and contributions to the development of the 10-Year Primary Health Care Plan, with final decisions remaining with the CHF Board and CHF staff. Resourcing and support for the group will be determined by the CEO.

What will be the focus of the group?

There will initially be two areas of focus;

- A) Voluntary enrolment for patients aged 70 years and over
 - o In the 2019-20 Budget the Australian Government announced \$448.5 million over the forward estimates to support a new model of voluntary patient enrolment of older Australians in primary care. CHF will be advising on the model for this initiative through the Primary Health Reform Steering Group. The Primary Health Care SIG will have the opportunity to discuss how this should be implemented and what services should be included, to inform CHF's position.
- B) Other priorities of the 10-Year Primary Health Care Plan
 - o CHF will be engaged in the development of the 10-Year Plan both through the Primary Health Reform Steering Group and through the wider public consultation process. The Primary Health Care SIG will help shape CHF's public

submissions as well as provide expertise on specific issues as they are raised. The 10-Year Plan is due to be completed in late 2020.

In the medium to longer-term CHF will continue to be an active contributor to the broader policy debate on primary health care, including developing proposals for new and innovative ways to improve consumer experience and health outcomes, and would be keen to seek the SIG's advice in relation to this ongoing work.

Co-Facilitators

The Primary Health Care SIG will be co-facilitated by a CHF staff member and a consumer. The consumer co-facilitator will be selected by the members of the Primary Health Care SIG. This process will be coordinated by the CHF co-facilitator.

What will their role involve?

The co-facilitators will work closely to:

- finalise the Agenda Items for each meeting;
- facilitate discussion during meetings;
- document outcomes of each meeting, including any actions arising;
- distribute meeting documents / Agenda papers and other relevant documents, to members in a timely manner; and
- keep SharePoint updated and monitor group discussions.

Members

This SIG is open to all consumers and consumer representatives with an interest in primary health care. The maximum number of people within the group at any time will be 25. This number includes the co-facilitators. This cap helps keep the group manageable while assuring diversity.

People can choose to leave the group if they no longer have the capacity. An email should be sent to the co-facilitators of the group to advise them of your withdrawal. This will not influence your relationship with CHF.

What contribution is expected from members?

Members of the Primary Health Care SIG are expected to participate actively in SIG teleconference meetings, which are initially expected to be held approximately bi-monthly (six per year) during business hours. This will include reading circulated papers before the meetings and sharing their relevant information, opinions or expertise to help prepare for meetings.

They may also be asked to provide input to CHF submissions or provide feedback on policy proposals 'out of session' to then be discussed as required at the SIG meetings. This may require members to agree to confidentiality requirements stipulated by CHF's partner organisations, including the Department of Health.

An online forum, SharePoint, will be established for members to engage in friendly discussion, share information and ideas between meetings. Members are expected to treat each other with respect and listen to each other.

Reporting

- A draft agenda will be distributed to members two weeks prior to a meeting inviting suggestions for additional agenda topics.

- A copy of the final agenda and all papers to be discussed will be distributed to all members at least one week prior to a meeting.
- A draft document highlighting outcomes of the meeting, including actions arising will be distributed to attendees of a meeting within one week of a meeting.
- Other documents or activities members may work on may have reporting requirements specific to those documents and activities.