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## THANK YOU REPS CELEBRATION 2017

Every year HCCA celebrates the work of our wonder consumer representatives by holding an event to thank consumer representatives for their contributions. HCCA President Sue Andrews gave a speech about the events of 2016 and what we can look forward to in 2017.

“It’s great to be here today to acknowledge and celebrate our collective and individual contributions to ensuring a strong consumer voice continues to be part of improving the quality and safety of our health system.

On behalf of HCCA, thank you to all our consumer representatives who have been involved in such an impressive scope of work – not just on ACT Health and other committees but also in your contributions to our consumer reference groups and your expert input into health policies and submissions.

It’s important to remember that in our engagement as consumer representatives we are the human face of the patient experience and also of HCCA – a significant role to have in working for system change that actually meets the needs of all health care consumers.

We couldn’t do it without the high level of professionalism and commitment of the whole HCCA staff team – a special thankyou to Kate Gorman and Sandra Avila, who have worked so hard and effectively in supporting consumer representatives over last 12 months.

We also have a new Consumer Representatives Program Steering Committee this year and thanks to the outgoing members - Bill Heins and Caitlin Stamford. I would particularly like to acknowledge and thank Adele Stevens, the outgoing Chair, for her contribution and the very important role she played with this committee.

It’s wonderful to see such active engagement of our members and consumer representatives with the work of HCCA. This year we will be reviewing and updating our Strategic Plan and the Executive Committee has set up an Evaluation Working Group to oversee this process, so we look forward to your involvement with this important work for the organisation.

You will also be interested in the major report undertaken by one of our policy officers, Sarah Spiller, - *“Of course it’s better if we’re there:” Consumer Involvement in Health Infrastructure in the ACT, 2009-2016.*

As you are all aware we now have in place a new three year funding agreement with ACT Health, including extra funding for health literacy.

We look forward to another busy and productive year ahead”.

Sue Andrews  
President

### Older Persons Abuse Prevention Referral and Information Line (APRIL)

At the HCCA Consumer Representatives Thank You celebration on 28 February, the topic of elder abuse came up in discussion. It was pointed out that the ACT has its own elder abuse hotline, known as APRIL. The Older Persons Abuse Prevention Referral and Information Line (APRIL) number is **02 6205 3535**. For more information about the ACT Government’s work to address elder abuse, you can go to the community services web page on this topic.

## UPDATE FROM THE OFFICE

I thought it might be useful to share an update on a few things happening at the office.

For the first time in seven months we have a full complement of staff. The new staff members are: Dr Kathryn Dwan, Sally Deacon, Claudia Cresswell and Molly Wilkinson. Claudia, Sally and Kathryn have a three-month probation period. We have had a great first week with them and are all feeling excited about the year ahead. [Their bios and photos have been uploaded to the website.](#)

We have signed a contract to relocate two of our offices to the large room next to the main office. They are currently painting this area and new carpet will be laid. Once this is complete and the cabling installed, the Consumer and Community Participation team and Health Literacy Team will move in there: Kate and Sally, Yelin, Claudia and Christine. The Policy and Research team will remain in the main office with me and the administration team. We are looking forward to being side by side rather than spread out along the corridor.

The Executive Committee (EC) has established an Evaluation Working Group. It is a sub-committee of the Executive Committee. The role of the group in 2017 is to review the HCCA Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and to develop recommendations to the EC on the changes required for the Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020. Michelle Banfield (HCCA Vice President) chairs this group. The first meeting was on Thursday 23 February 2017.

The group agreed on the approach for the review. This will include a member Survey - online and paper form; stakeholder survey - online and paper form; targeted interviews with stakeholders; and focus groups with members. This will focus on our achievement against the existing strategic plan and identify opportunities for the next plan.

The staff team will support the work of this group but it is important that the strategic plan is a member led exercise - so we look forward to your contributions and your involvement in this process.

Darlene Cox  
Executive Director

### How one woman prevented a national tragedy

Dr. Frances Oldham Kelsey had only been with the [US Food and Drug Administration](#) for about a month when she was tasked with reviewing a drug named thalidomide for distribution in America. Marketed as a sedative for pregnant women, thalidomide was already available in Canada, Germany, and several African countries. It could have been a very simple approval. But for Kelsey, something didn't sit right. There were no tests showing thalidomide was safe for human use, particularly during pregnancy. [Click here to read the full story about how Dr Kelsey prevented a national tragedy in America.](#)

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*The following is a report from consumer representative Bernard Borg Caruana who is a member of the Alerts System Steering Committee. This committee has been working on improvements to the 'Alerts' system, which is an important part of electronic health records. It alerts health staff to a wide variety of factors which may impact on an individual person's treatment, such as adverse reactions to some medications, food allergies, the presence of an Advance Care Plan, or the involvement of Child/ Youth Protective Services in a child's life.*

### ALERTS MANAGEMENT SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION FROM 8 JANUARY 2017

Alerts are a key aspect of patient safety. Across ACT Health and Calvary Public Hospital there are an array of disparate electronic clinical systems that are used to record and manage both administrative and clinical Alerts. The ACT Patient Administration System (ACTPAS) was initially identified as the master system and 'source of truth' for alert information. Currently ACT Health and Calvary Public

Hospital utilise a variety of electronic information and clinical systems which hold alert information. Each of these systems hold different Alerts reference sets and data specifications. There is limited integration between the systems, and Alerts information is not commonly shared between the systems. There is currently no governance to support the recording and management of Alerts information across the organisation. This decentralised management and storage of Alerts information poses an enormous risk to patient, visitor and staff safety as healthcare professionals are unable to access a single, accurate and complete record of a patient's clinical information and journey.

The primary objective of the Alerts Management Project is to reduce the risk of patients having an adverse event where a previously identified medical condition, allergy or serious unexpected drug reaction occurs. The AMS will provide an interface for integration with other clinical systems to provide an accurate and complete record of Alerts information that is up to date and easily accessible to support and improve patient care.

The rationale for the implementation of an alerts management solution is to provide:

- A single trusted point for clinicians to view/add, review and end patient/client alerts;
  - A standardised alerts reference set and data specifications;
  - Standardised governance processes;
  - An electronic system reflective of national standards and Best Practice;
  - Elimination of the need to duplicate alerts information on other information management systems;
  - Greater accessibility to accurate, complete and up-to-date alerts information for clinicians;
  - An integrated approach to the sharing and management of alerts information.
  - The key benefits to be gained from a successful implementation include:
- A system that provides an alerts reference set and data specifications to align with national directions in alerts management and follows national standards;
  - Consistent business processes for alerts management;
  - Greater accessibility to accurate, complete and up-to-date alerts information for clinicians;
  - Improved continuity of care for patients/clients between Health Directorate healthcare settings;
  - Standardised governance process to monitor and endorse new alerts items onto the alerts register;
  - Reduced entering of alert related incidences in RiskMan;
  - Increased patient/client confidence in the handling of sensitive information.

New Alerts Management functions were successfully implemented across ACT Health in Clinical Portal from 8 January 2017, to provide a single trusted point for clinicians to view, add, review and end patient alerts. This has enabled a standardised alerts reference set and data specifications, reflecting national standards and best practice. It has improved data quality by reducing spelling errors and other incongruities at the point of entry.

The implementation of the Alerts Management functions was a successful collaboration between Orion Health; MKM; Management, Record Management, and Clinical areas of ACT Health; and the Healthcare Consumer's Association, through a Steering Committee and a Clinical Working Group.

An Evaluation will be completed, with data collected at one month and six months following implementation. It is expected that the new functions will lead to improved patient safety, better continuity of care for patients moving between healthcare settings, and increased patient confidence in the handling of sensitive information. Already there has been an increase in the number of alerts added or updated in the Clinical Portal, from a previous average of 350 to 450 per month in ACTPAS, to 798 alerts added or updated in the 3 weeks following implementation. This indicates that post-implementation there has been an increase already demonstrated in access to the Alerts functions by clinicians via the Clinical Portal.

Bernard Borg Caruana  
Consumer Representative

## ENDORSEMENTS

### Consumer Representative Endorsements

Sue Schreiner → Policy Advisory Committee

Fran Parker → Clare Holland House Palliative Care Committee

### HCCA Staff Endorsements

None.

## HCCA EVENTS

### Consumer Representatives Forum

**Please note:** This meeting is for current consumer representatives endorsed by HCCA. If you have any questions about this, please contact Kate Gorman on [kategorman@hcca.org.au](mailto:kategorman@hcca.org.au).

**Time:** 11:00am to 2:00pm

**Date:** Wednesday 29 March 2017

**Venue:** SHOUT large meeting room, Building 1, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place, Pearce.

**RSVP:** To Kate Gorman by Wednesday 22 March on [kategorman@hcca.org.au](mailto:kategorman@hcca.org.au) or on 6230 7800. Please advise of any dietary requirements.

## COMMITTEE VACANCIES

There is a vacancy for a consumer representative on each of the committees below. *The vacancies on the Standard 9 Committee and the Woman, Youth and Children Unit Community Health Programs Quality and Safety Committee have been extended.* Nominations for the committees below close on **Monday 27 March 2017**.

### Standard 9 Committee

This high-level committee will establish and maintain systems for recognising and responding to clinical deterioration appropriately in accordance with Standard 9 of the National Safety and Quality Health Standards. This committee has a wide variety of functions, including ensuring governance arrangements are in place to support the development, implementation, and maintenance of organisation-wide recognition and response systems to patient deterioration, review and endorse policies, procedures and protocols relevant to patient deterioration and provide expert advice to capital planning working groups for future developments within the Health Directorate.

This committee meets every second Wednesday of each month at 2:00pm at The Canberra Hospital.

### Woman, Youth and Children Unit Community Health Programs (WYCCHP) Quality and Safety Committee

This committee aims to monitor and improve the standard of clinical care for Woman, Youth and Children Unit Community Health Program (WYCCHP) clients through effective structures, systems and processes. They discuss issues of risk and safety and quality of patient care for all of the Programs. The WYCCHP includes a wide range of services:

What WYCCHP services have in common, is that the health care is not an extension of hospital or acute care and often the recipients of care are 'well' but need support through a period of vulnerability whether that is because it's a significant period of rapid development (young children, high school students) or a woman has experienced trauma or a family is on the margins and therefore any children are more vulnerable.

The successful nominee will have an interest and some background knowledge of this area of health.

Meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of the month from 10am until midday. The location is the 3rd floor of 1 Moore Street, Civic.

## COMMITTEE VACANCIES (CONT.)

### The Walk-In Centre

This committee provides strategic direction for the Walk-in Centres at the Belconnen Community Health Centre and the Tuggeranong Community Health Centre. It is responsible for reviewing and recommending changes to key performance indicators, risk management, adverse events, clinical policy, occupational health and safety, and quality assurance projects and accreditation. The successful nominee will have consumer experience using the services at any of the Walk-in Centres. Ideally, the committee are looking for a consumer between the ages of 20-25 and/or with children between 6-8 years old. If you are interested in applying but do not fall into these criteria, please submit a nomination form anyway.

This committee meets every two months on the third Thursday of the month, from 9.30-11am. The location alternates between the walk-in centres at Belconnen and Tuggeranong.

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## HEALTH POLICY UPDATE

Hi everyone! Sarah and I have been welcoming Kathryn Dwan in her new role as the Manager of Policy and Research at HCCA. It is great to have her on board in our staff team.

Current issues in the policy space include:

- Single Aged Care Quality Framework - [Draft Aged Care Quality Standards](#)
- Single Aged Care Quality Framework - [Options for assessing performance against aged care quality standards](#)

If you are interested in these consultations, please get in touch if you need copies of the relevant documents or for more information. Or please e-mail your thoughts to me at [kathrynbria@hcca.org.au](mailto:kathrynbria@hcca.org.au). Get involved in policy - it is a great way for consumers to help shape the direction of health care!

Kathryn Briant  
Policy Team

### **Increasing choice in Home Care: changes from 27 Feb 2017**

Commencing 27 February 2017, a home care package will be allocated to the consumer, allowing consumers to direct funding for their home care package to the provider of their choice. This change gives consumers a greater degree of choice in their preferred provider, as well as the type of care they receive.

#### **What is changing?**

Funding for a home care package will follow the consumer, replacing the current system where home care 'places' are allocated to individual approved providers in particular locations. Consumers will have more choice and control over their home care, including the ability to change providers if they wish.

A new national prioritisation process will be established for home care, including the establishment of a national package queue, which will assign packages to consumers based on their individual needs and how long they have been waiting for services, regardless of where they live.

[Click here to access a range of other support materials for consumers and providers about the changes, available on the department's website.](#)

## LOCAL EVENTS

### NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research Public Lecture Tour 2017

[The National Health and Medical Research Council \(NHMRC\)](#) is holding a free national public lecture series on the current state of dementia research in Australia, internationally and the work of the National Institute for Dementia Research. Key note speakers will be Professor Henry Brodaty, Co-Director of the Centre for Healthy Brain Ageing and Harry Johns, President and CEO of the USA Alzheimer's Association. The lecture will cover:

- What is Alzheimer's and Dementia
- Update on cause/s of AD
- Prevention of AD and dementias
- Developments in diagnosis and treatments
- Maintaining quality of life for people with dementia and their families
- Hope for the future
- International perspectives on prioritising dementia research

**Date:** Thursday 16 March 2017

**Time:** 12:00pm - 1:30pm (arrive at 11:30am)

**Venue:** National Museum of Australia, Lawson Crescent Acton, ACT 2601

**Register:** [To register for this event please click here.](#)

### Pain Support ACT - Using Feldenkrais for Pain Relief

Feldenkrais is a method of thinking that helps to re-organise and create new connection with the brain instead of using muscle strength to help with chronic pain. Pain Support ACT will be holding a session with registered practitioner Cassandra Morrow who has used this technique for over 15 years. The session will involve general information about Feldenkrais and some simple movements that you'll be able to practice and take away.

**Date:** Tuesday 28 March 2017

**Time:** 12:00pm - 2:00pm

**Venue:** SHOUT, Building 1, 1 Collett Place Pearce

**Cost:** Gold coin donation is appreciated. Tea and coffee will be provided but please bring your own lunch. If you would like more information, please call 6290 1984 or [visit the Pain Support ACT Website.](#)

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

We have categorised the Items of Interest sections into the current HCCA Policy Priority areas for 2017. We hope that this is a convenient way for you to find the articles that are of interest to you.

### Safety and Quality

#### **CHF – Time for Public Listing of Specialist Fees**

[The Consumers Health Forum of Australia \(CHF\)](#) have released a statement regarding the needs for specialists to be transparent with their fees to consumers. This transparency would allow consumers to make better informed choices as well as improve accessibility for consumers who consider the unknown costs of specialists to be a barrier. CHF CEO Leanne Wells proposed that an independent and authoritative website should be established to list fees and data on the quality of care of each specialist so consumers can make informed decisions about which specialist will be best for them.

“Choice of specialist is an important healthcare decision for patients and their families – often the most important decision they will make in their lives”.

If this website should be established, specialists might be given the option to not be included in the list, however they would lose their eligibility to access Medicare and subsidised health insurance benefits. Ms Wells also commented that “...there is no way the patient can gauge whether higher fees represent higher quality”, which emphasises the need for this website. [If you would like to read the full media from CHF, please click here.](#)

#### **Inquiry into the Employment of People with Disabilities**

[The Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services](#) have invited members of the community for submissions into the employment of people with disabilities. This inquiry aims to identify ways of making it easier for people with disabilities to be employed as well as how people with disabilities will be supported in their employment roles. Written submissions will be open until 26 April 2017 and the Committee intends to hold its public hearing in May. [If you would like to make a submission or find out more information on the terms and conditions of this inquiry, please click here.](#)

## ITEMS OF INTEREST (CONT.)

### ACT Medicinal Cannabis Advisory Group - EOI

Minister for Health Meegan Fitzharris MLA has announced the establishment of an expert committee to provide advice to the government on the broader non-clinical economic, legal and social issues related to the introduction of a medicinal cannabis scheme in the ACT. Expressions of Interest (EOI) for this committee are now open for people who have experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Experience or expertise in medicinal cannabis or similar care and treatment programs;
- Knowledge of research and trials;
- Community engagement;
- Capacity to make a contribution; and
- A connection and commitment to the ACT through their choice to live and/or work in the ACT

**EOI close on Friday 24 March 2017.** If you would like more information, please see the document attached.

### Health of Older People

#### **COTA ACT - Street Smart Seniors**

At the end of 2016, [Council of the Ageing ACT \(COTA ACT\)](#) received a grant from the ACT government to implement their Street Smart Seniors Road Safety Initiative. This program is free for older Canberrans who may not be as confident on the road or for people who would like to refresh their driver safety knowledge. You will learn:

- Being an older driver—the advantages and the challenges
- Road safety and pedestrian safety tips
- How to transition from being a driver to a non-driver
- Travel and transport options and concessions for seniors
- Where to go for further help or information

If you would like to find out more about these sessions, please contact Ingrid Pepper on 6282 3777 or by email [communityed@cotaact.org.au](mailto:communityed@cotaact.org.au).

### **Nursing Homes denied access to GP Mental Health Plans – Petition**

At the beginning of 2017, it was reported that over 175,000 older Australians living in aged care facilities do not have access to Medicare-funded mental health treatment through the Better Access to Mental Health Care Program as they are not considered to be 'patients in our community'. Outraged by this discrimination, COTA ACT have launched a petition, calling for Health Minister, Hon. Greg Hunt, to take action and to revise this restriction on Medicare access to mental health for older people. [If you would like to find out more information or sign the petition, visit the COTA ACT website.](#)

### **Living Well with Metastatic Breast Cancer: The Palliative Care Toolkit**

Our new Health Policy and Research Manager, Kathryn Dwan, has helped to develop a palliative care toolkit for people who are living with metastatic breast cancer. The free online toolkit produces tailored information on how palliative care can improve quality of life for you and your family. All you need to do is to provide information about your circumstances and answer five questions. It also points you in the direction of local palliative care support services. It not only is useful for people living with Metastatic Breast Cancer, but also for their family, friends and carers. [If you would like to find out more information on the toolkit, please click here.](#)

### Primary Care

#### **Latest news from CHN**

Read all the latest news from the [Capital Health Network](#):

- [Health InterACTion issue 38](#)
- [2/52 Health Care Bulletin](#)

## LOCAL EVENTS (CONT.)

### Grief and Loss Information Session for Seniors – Friday 24 March 2017

As part of Seniors Week 2017, the Canberra Grief Centre will host a free grief and loss information session for seniors with a Concession or Pension Card.

The session will cover:

- The losses we experience as we age
- The relationship between loss and grief
- What is grief and how can it affect us
- What causes us to grieve the way we do
- Understanding the difference between 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' grieving
- How we can support ourselves and others who have experienced loss

**Date:** Friday 24 March 2017

**Time:** 1:00pm – 3:00pm

**Venue:** Griffith Neighbourhood Hall, off Stuart Street, Griffith

**Register:** [Please click here to register](#) or phone Sonia Fenwick on 0409 966 515 or Mandy Cox on 0401 344 577.

### Seniors Week 2017

ACT Seniors Week is an annual celebration featuring hundreds of free events held across the ACT by government, community and commercial organisations. The objectives of Seniors Week are to encourage older people to live healthy and active lifestyles all year round, demonstrate that older age can be a time of learning and adventure and to celebrate older people and their continuing contribution to family, friends, workplaces and communities, and across generations. This year, Seniors Week will be held from 18 – 26 March and a timetable of key events can be found below:

Event	Date	Time	Venue
Seniors Week Launch	17 <sup>th</sup> March	3pm -5pm	Legislative Assembly
ACT Chief Ministers Concert	21 <sup>st</sup> March	10:30am – 12:30pm	Albert Hall
Seniors Week Expo	23 <sup>rd</sup> March	10am – 3pm	EPIC
Positive Ageing Awards	24 <sup>th</sup> March	12:30pm – 2:30pm	Ginninderra Labor Club Charnwood

## Contact Us

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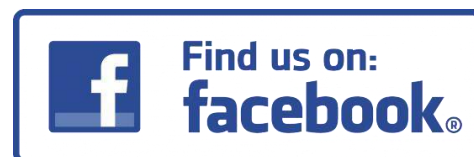
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Please note that Consumer Bites provides a small snippet of health related articles our members might find interesting to consider, ponder and analyse. The HCCA does not purport to endorse any opinions or the veracity of claims contained within the articles.

Consumer Bites is the fortnightly newsletter from **Health Care Consumers' Association ACT**

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