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CLINICAL SERVICES FRAMEWORK

You may recall that in December 2016 I attended an ACT Health funded event for Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) that provided information on the process for developing the *Clinical Services Framework*, including a series of timelines. At the time it was clearly stated that the *Clinical Services Framework* and the Specialty Service Plans would be key documents to inform the procurement of NGO health services into the future. I have written about this previously in [Consumer Bites \(Volume 4, Issue 1\)](#).

Last Friday I attended a follow-on meeting of NGOs, once again funded by ACT Health, which was meant to discuss the *Clinical Services Framework*, related issues of importance to our sectors and potential collaboration in engaging with these processes. The meeting was hosted by Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Association (ATODA) and Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT). About 50 people attended from 40 organisations.

Rosemary O'Donnell, the Executive leading the Clinical Service Planning process presented to the group, and provided an update on the process. One of the changes is the name, it is now called the *Territory Wide Clinical Services Plan*.

Unfortunately, the presentation raised more questions than it answered in terms of the relationship between the Clinical Services Plan and the procurement of services from NGO. This is an important matter that needs to be clarified as soon as possible. **Most concerning was the advice that there will be no community consultation on the Clinical Services Plan.** This plan is due to be launched in the next six weeks, but consultation will be limited to the development of the Specialty Services Plans. This contradicts ACT Health's own acknowledgment that [community consultation "helps ACT Health make informed policy decisions about issues that affect the community"](#).

On 15 December 2016 the Minister for Health, Meegan Fitzharris MLA, spoke about the government's priorities in health and ensuring that the people of Canberra have access to high quality healthcare services when and where they need them. [You can read this speech online here.](#)

The *Territory Wide Clinical Services Plan* is "a high-level strategic plan setting out the principles to guide the planning and delivery of clinical and community Territory-wide health services over the next decade." **Therefore, it is essential that consumers and the broader community have an opportunity to consider this document.**

By contrast I recently attended a symposium with the Minister for Education, Yvette Berry MLA and senior staff from the Education Directorate with a range of stakeholders. They are [embarking on a process to enhance equity in education and looking at opportunities for reform](#). This is a grassroots consultation process that is positively looking to partner with community organisations, parents, students and employers as well as the general public to develop a plan to improve public education services and improve educational outcomes.

How can the ACT Government do it so well in one directorate and have limited engagement in another area? This decision not to consult on the *Territory Wide Clinical Services Plan* (aka *Clinical Services Framework*) needs to be reconsidered.

Darlene Cox
Executive Director

Share your experience about transvaginal mesh or tape implants

Transvaginal mesh is used as an implant to resolve pelvic organ prolapse and stress urinary incontinence in women. The product design and implantation techniques appear to be the cause of certain serious, life-altering complications in some women. It is estimated that there may be as many as 100,000 women with the implant. And of these, the proportion of women suffering complications has been variously estimated to be anywhere between 1% and 30%.

[The Health Issues Centre](#) (HIC) has created a Facebook page to try and gather information about the number of women affected, and what their experience has been. There is an information sheet to help women get the answers and support that they need. And if there are consumers who would like to provide information anonymously about their experience with mesh, [there is a confidential online survey here](#). So far over 1200 people have completed the survey. It is clearly an important issue that has generated strong interest.

Mesh implants have been used since the late 1990s and there is currently no register to systematically capture the number of procedures that have taken place in Australia. The procedure is considered to be only partially reversible. Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved use of the mesh, however, [more recently it has advised it is monitoring the situation](#). [Women are encouraged to report complications via the TGA website here](#). But consumers need to note that the serial number of the mesh implanted is required to report complications, and this can only be obtained through access to medical records.

On 15 February 2017, a senate inquiry was launched into the number of women in Australia with transvaginal mesh implants and related matters. Submissions are due 31 May 2017, with the report and recommendations to follow in November 2017. A guide has been developed to assist women or members of their family to make a submission. The HIC encourages and supports women to consider making a submission. [If you would like further information, please contact the Health Issues Centre using the details by clicking here](#). HCCA is working with the other state peaks to develop a response to the senate inquiry. If you have experience of this, or know people who have please let Darlene Cox know. Darlene is taking the lead on this work for HCCA.

Pathology Results to be shared in My Health Record

[The Australian Digital Health Agency](#) (the Agency) have announced that as of April 2017, consumers can access their pathology results through their My Health Record. Pathology tests carried out in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District and the Children's Hospital at Randwick are a part of the initial roll out, with work currently being conducted in the ACT to be included on this list in the next few months. The Agency said that 'Having pathology results published in a single location means patients can share test results with other health professionals. Clinicians will benefit from having access to their patient's results in circumstances where they did not initiate the requests.' However, there will be a 7 day delay before consumers will have access to their results, a decision that has been made to allow consumers and health care providers to have appropriate communication about follow up care, where possible. Consumers will also have the choice to not have their results uploaded to their My Health Record, as well as having the option to restrict clinician access to certain pathology results. If you would like to find out more information on access to pathology results via My Health Record, please see the document attached.

Support Groups for carers and people living with chronic conditions or disability

Arthritis ACT are offering a series of support group sessions for people living with or caring for other with a long term chronic conditions or a disability. The sessions will run for 1.5 hours over six weeks and will be facilitated by a professional counsellor and educator. The sessions will create a supportive and confidential group environment for you to share experiences and stories, as well as develop solution-focused, resources and skills to develop a personal plan for wellbeing.

Sessions commenced on Wednesday 3 May, but courses will be running throughout the year. The cost of the six sessions is \$60 if you're a member of Arthritis ACT or any SHOUT affiliated organisation. If you are a member of the community the cost of the sessions is \$120.

Please contact Arthritis ACT if you would like to attend the sessions or for more information at info@arthritisact.org.au or by calling 1800 011 041.

New HCCA Staff – Molly Wilkinson

The next staff member we would like to introduce is Molly Wilkinson who is filling in as an Administration Officer while Sandra Avila (Office Manager) is on maternity leave.

Molly has joined the HCCA team after completing a Bachelor of Asia-Pacific Studies at the ANU in 2016 and speaks Mandarin and some Indonesian. Molly has had experiences working as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in China and is keen to work with HCCA, learning about the ins-and-outs of how an organisation works. As an administration officer, Molly is involved with every HCCA team ensuring that events are organised, oversees the running of the office including the phones and computers, provides support to the Executive Director and provides support to Consumer Reference Groups. As her first job in the community sector, Molly is excited to better understand health from the consumer perspective, learn more about the health system in the ACT and how we can empower members of our community to be an advocate for their own health. Molly hopes that the experience and knowledge that she gains from spending time at HCCA will be useful further down her career path.



WCHM Survey – Women and Chronic Disease

The Women's Centre for Health Matters (WCHM) is conducting a community consultation survey with ACT women aged 18-50 years to find out their experiences of chronic disease and accessing appropriate services and supports in the ACT.

WCHM is seeking to explore;

- Younger women's knowledge and experience programs, courses, and services to provide information and support to those with chronic diseases;
- Which information, services, and support are relevant to younger women living with chronic disease – including their suitability and the age-appropriateness for younger women with chronic diseases; and
- The gaps and barriers that might exist, and ideas to improve younger women's access to and involvement in responses that assist them to manage their conditions in their life stage.

All survey information is confidential. **The survey will close on May 26th 2017.** [To participate in this survey click here.](#)

ENDORESEMENTS

Consumer Representative Endorsements

Kerry Snell → Homebirth Governance Committee

HCCA Staff Endorsements

Darlene Cox → Quality and Safety Executive Directors Committee

Kathryn Dwan → Consumer Handout Committee

Claudia Cresswell → Sustainable Transport Working Group

Consumer Representatives Training Review!

HCCA are undertaking a review of the Consumer Representatives Training. We are interested to hear your feedback. What has worked well, what could be improved, what would you like to see more of and what is important to you to learn about?

Please get in touch with Sally Deacon, Manager for Consumer & Community Participation at sallydeacon@hcca.org.au or Kate Gorman, Consumer Representatives Program Coordinator at kategorman@hcca.org.au.

Latest news from CHF

Read all the latest news from [Consumers Health Forum](#)

- [healthUPdate, April 2017](#)

COMMITTEE VACANCIES

The vacancies below closes on Tuesday 23 May 2017.

Calvary (Public Hospital) Infrastructure Planning and Service Development Committee

Calvary Hospital is seeking a consumer representative to join the Infrastructure Planning and Service Development Committee. This committee's role is to provide the basis for a consistent and standardised approach to capital infrastructure planning and design and the associated Service Development requirements.

This committee meets at Calvary Hospital, Bruce, on the second Thursday of each month from 10 am to 11.30 am.

Canberra Hospital and Health Services - Standard 9 Committee – Recognition of the Deteriorating Patient

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.

ACT Health - Health in Pregnancy Working Group

The aim of this working group is to improve service delivery for larger women during and between pregnancies to support optimal outcomes for mother and baby. It looks at evidence-based services and programs, ACT Health policies, guidelines and resources and training opportunities to support staff to deliver services in a client-centred, non-judgemental and sensitive way.

Meetings of this group are held bimonthly on the second Wednesday of the month between 1-2pm. Meetings for 2017 are scheduled for 14 June, 9 August, 11 October and 13 December. Meetings will be held in Meeting Room 6, Level 3, Centenary Hospital for Women and Children.

COMMITTEE VACANCIES (CONT.)

BreastScreen ACT Community Reference Group

This group provides a forum for women of the ACT and SE NSW communities to discuss issues and provide feedback, support and advice to the ACT breast screening program on matters related to the services offered by this program.

The BreastScreen ACT Community Reference Group meets twice a year, usually in March and October. The next meeting is scheduled for 24 October. The group sometimes seeks feedback/review of consumer materials out of session via email.

Meetings are held at the BreastScreen ACT administrative location, this is currently at 1 Moore Street, Canberra City.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Affordable, Accessible, Appropriate Housing for Older Australians - COTA Australia National Policy Forum

Thursday 22 June 2017, National Press Club, Canberra

Housing security is a basic human need and human right.

This year's [COTA National Policy Forum](#) will place the spotlight on what housing means in later life and explore current policy issues and future trends around housing for older Australians. The Forum will bring together an exciting line-up of policy makers, academics, consumers, advocates and others to discuss some of the pressing housing issues of our time and how they affect older people. These issues include:

- What does the crisis in housing affordability and availability mean for current and future groups of older people?
- What do older people need and want in their housing?
- What kinds of housing supports well-being in later life?
- What are the key challenges facing older renters?
- Why are there increasing rates of homelessness amongst older people and how can this be turned around?
- Should the home be viewed as a financial asset to be leveraged to help fund retirement years?

HCCA will sponsor **two** consumer representatives to attend the [COTA National Policy Forum](#).

Sponsorship includes the cost of the event, and transport assistance if you require it. Consumer representatives who are sponsored by HCCA to attend events are requested to provide a report to HCCA so that other members can find out about and benefit from items of interest presented at the event. If you are interested in attending this forum please complete an expression of interest, or call Kate at the HCCA office on 6230 7800 for assistance or more information about this.

Seniors Health Roundtable 2016 Report

The ACT Government has released its findings from the Seniors Health Roundtable that happened in May 2016 in collaboration with HCCA. The report outlines six key topics identified at the forum: advocacy, access to health, transitions in care, end of life care, health technologies and health promotion, wellbeing and healthy living. These elements have been incorporated under three general themes for improvement: health, literacy and empowerment, system navigation and advocacy, and practice changes. Along with the *ACT Active Ageing Framework 2015-2018*, the information gained from the forum will be used to further improve the health and lifestyle of older people in the ACT community. [If you would like to read the report from the Seniors Health Roundtable 2016, click here.](#)

HEALTH POLICY & RESEARCH UPDATE

Kathryn Dwan has recently been working with the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) to develop a logo for TIS that includes their contact phone number. This issue arose when we wanted to include information about TIS on some patient information/handouts we have been working on with ACT Health. The logo with the added phone number has now been developed, and looks like this →

We hope to continue working with TIS in this collaborative manner.

We will use this revised logo as we continue to work with ACT Health on their patient information and handouts. In related news – congratulations to Kathryn Dwan who has been appointed as a HCCA member of the Consumer Handout Committee.

Kathryn Briant last week finished a submission to the Independent Review of Accreditation Systems within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for Health Professions. A special note of thanks to Fiona Tito Wheatland for her input on this. We look forward to hearing more about how this review progresses.

A reminder that over the coming months HCCA may be asked to provide feedback on a range of policies and procedures for the new University of Canberra Public Hospital (UCPH). If this is something that interests you, or if there are any specific services in which you would be keen to comment, please let us know by emailing kathrynbriant@hcca.org.au or phoning HCCA on 02 6230 7800.

Kathryn Briant
Policy Team Member

Have you or a loved one received or wanted to receive palliative care at home?

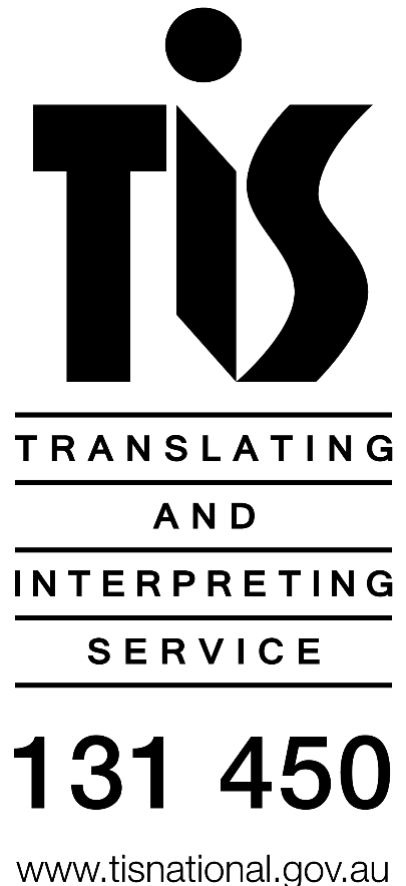
Then we are keen to hear from you, especially if home-based palliative care was not offered or you could not access them. This ACT Health funded project is focused on the experiences of older people and the unpaid caregivers of older people.

To participate, you'll need to:

- be aged 55 or older and receiving palliative care services; or
- be a caregiver for a loved one or family member who is currently receiving palliative care and is over 55 years; or
- have previously been a caregiver for a loved one aged 55 or older who received palliative care (within the last five years).

Participants in this project will take part in a semi-structured interview with HCCA Policy Officer, Sarah Spiller. Sarah will also work with each participant to create an *Experience Wheel* – this is a one-page image that shows your key positive and negative experiences of healthcare services, and the areas you identify as requiring improvement.

If you are interested in taking part in the project or would like to find out more, please call Sarah Spiller or HCCA Manager of Research and Policy, Dr Kathryn Dwan, by calling 02 6273 8000 or emailing sarahspiller@hcca.org.au. We are also glad to talk if you don't meet the criteria to participate in this project, but would like to share an experience of palliative care to inform HCCA's ongoing systemic advocacy in this area.



LOCAL EVENTS

Meditation and Relaxation for Persistent Pain

Pain Support ACT Inc Expert Speaker Program presents Suzanne Newnham who will talk about meditation and relaxation for persistent pain.

Not sure if meditation is for you? Does pain interfere with any type of relaxing? Come along and explore various techniques; you can either participate or just listen. Suzanne has been teaching various styles of meditation since 1988. From a life-time of chronic pain of varying degrees, she has developed a variety of meditative techniques for people experiencing chronic pain & fatigue.

The session will be completed with a longer meditation practice where you can sit, stand or lie down as you wish; if lying on the floor you might like to bring a blanket/cushion if possible.

There will be opportunities to ask questions and give feedback and the session is open to everyone.

Date: Tuesday 23rd May 2017

Time: 12pm-2pm

Where: The Pearce Community Centre, Building 1, 1 Collett Place Pearce

Cost: Event free/gold coin donation to help Pain Support cover basic costs is appreciated. Tea & coffee provided. BYO lunch

More Info: 62901984 or

<http://www.painsupportact.org.au>

National Families Week

The Canberra Interfaith Forum and Canberra Multicultural Community Forum are hosting an event for National Families Week on Saturday 20 May 2017. The aim of this event is to bring together families of diverse backgrounds together and will include activities for children as well as a short "Laughter Yoga Session". Chief Guests will be Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA and Elizabeth Kikkert MLA. A light vegetarian dinner will be served.

Date: Saturday 20 May 2017

Time: 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Venue: Function Room Theo Notaras Multicultural Centre, London Circuit, Canberra

Cost: Gold coin donation is appreciated

RSVP: [Click here to RSVP before May 17 for catering purposes](#)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Safety and Quality

FARE Annual Alcohol Poll

[The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education's](#) (FARE) Annual Alcohol Poll (the Poll) assesses Australians attitudes towards alcohol, alcohol consumption behaviours, awareness and experiences of alcohol harm, and perspectives on various alcohol policies. This is the eighth year the poll has been conducted. FARE is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to stop the harm caused by alcohol. We know that the alcohol is harmful and FARE reports that more than 5,500 lives are lost every year and more than 157,000 people are hospitalised, making alcohol one of our nation's greatest preventive health challenges. [You can read the full report on the results of the poll by clicking here.](#)

The poll shows that most people in Australia believe we as a society have problems with excess drinking or alcohol abuse and more needs to be done to reduce the harm caused by alcohol.

- 74% believing that alcohol related problems in Australia will worsen or remain the same over the next five to ten years,
- 81% believing that more needs to be done to reduce the harm caused by alcohol.

This is relevant to Canberra. [The Chief Health Officers \(CHO\) Report in 2016](#) found that alcohol abuse was an issue affecting the health of people across our communities. The CHO Report includes Australian guidelines to reduce health risks from drinking alcohol.

For healthy men and women:

- Drinking no more than 4 standard drinks on a single occasion reduces the risk of alcohol related injury from that occasion.
- Drinking no more than 2 standard drinks on any day reduces the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury.

For children and young people under 18 years of age:

- Not drinking alcohol is the safest option, especially for children under 15 years of age.

For pregnant and breastfeeding women:

- Not drinking alcohol is the safest option.

ITEMS OF INTEREST (CONT.)

Regulating the health and social care service in England - Care Quality Commission (CQC)

As accreditation for Canberra Hospital and Health Services nears (April 2018), we are looking at how another health service, the NHS, is overseen and regulated.

The Care and Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulatory body overseeing health and social care in England, it has some similarities with the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Healthcare, but a broader remit, including social care and with regulatory powers. It uses its powers to

1. "Protect consumers from harm" and "make sure they receive care that meets the standards consumers have a right to expect".
2. "Make sure services improve if the standard of care they provide has fallen below acceptable levels".
3. "Hold care providers and managers to account for failures in how care is provided".

The process of health and social care regulation and inspection is complex and requires a multitude of information sources and perspectives to ensure that the standards of care are maintained and improved. The voice and experiences of care by consumers and carers are a core part of the regulatory process in the health and social care system in England. [More information on the CQC can be found here.](#)

Primary Care

Calls for Private Health Insurance Reform in Federal Budget - AHCRA

The [Australian Health Care Reform Alliance](#) (AHCRA) have released a media statement in support of [Consumers Health Forum](#)'s (CHF) article about the needs to reform the Private Health Insurance (PHI) system as it is failing to meet the needs of consumers. Ahead of the Federal Budget on Tuesday 9 May, there is significant evidence to support that a single national insurer contains health care costs while maximising equity of access to both public and private health services. 'One of the important parts of any reform process is identifying workable alternatives to the current situation. This can be a challenge in relation to PHI, as after almost 20 years of the PHI rebate, it can be difficult to envisage a health system that does not rely on this ongoing industry subsidy.' [To](#)

[read the full article on PHI from AHCRA, please click here.](#)

Latest news from CHN

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

- [Health InterACTion issue 42](#)
- [2/52 Health Care Bulletin](#)

HCCA STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

The HCCA Executive Committee is currently reviewing the existing Strategic Plan (2014 – 2017). A survey has been developed with our Evaluation Working Group to look at the perceptions of members and external stakeholders about how we have been performing against this plan.

This survey is an important element in this process.

We will also be undertaking a series of interviews with key people to discuss the results of the survey

[We would appreciate you taking the time to complete the following online survey here.](#) All responses are anonymous and confidential. **The survey closes on Wednesday 31 May 2017.**

If you have any questions, or would like more information, please contact Darlene Cox at the HCCA office.

Contact Us

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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**

Editor: Khalia Lee



Pathology reports are being shared with the My Health Record

From April 2017, pathology reports will start being shared in the My Health Record.

You and any healthcare professionals involved in your care will be able to access these pathology reports via your My Health Record, wherever and whenever they are needed.

Sharing pathology reports with the My Health Record will help:

- Improve access to information;
- Reduce duplicate testing; and
- Save your doctor or other members of your healthcare team time trying to locate or request copies of results.

It will also help you:

- Keep track of the tests you have had; and
- Allow a comparison of your results over time.

When and where is this happening

Over the next 12 months, pathology reports will be shared in the My Health Record for inpatients from public hospitals in New South Wales Health, Northern Territory Department of Health, Tasmanian Health Service, ACT Health and Queensland Health. The Northern Territory Department of Health are already uploading diagnostic imaging reports to the My Health Record. Other pathology and diagnostic imaging providers are also working to participate in sending reports to My Health Record. This means, you may not find pathology or diagnostic imaging reports in the My Health Record just yet. However, within the next year or so, you will start to see more of these reports becoming available.

What you need to know

Your pathology report will still be sent to your regular GP, or whoever has requested the tests, as usual.

If you have a My Health Record:

- Your pathology report will be uploaded to your My Health Record and will be immediately available to members of your healthcare team; and
- Your pathology report will be available for you to view after seven days. This is so your doctor can review the report and contact you about the results, if need be, before you can see it in your My Health Record.

If you do not want a report uploaded to your My Health Record, **please tell your doctor.**

In some parts of Australia, State or Territory legislation prohibits the disclosure of sensitive information (e.g. AIDS or HIV status) without the express consent of the individual. In these instances, the reports will not be sent to the My Health Record.



Reading your pathology report

- It is always best to discuss your results or any concerns with your doctor;
- Reading the results can be confusing; and
- All that is red or outside the range is not always abnormal.

For more information about reading your pathology report visit:



Lab Tests Online^{AU}
EXPLAINING PATHOLOGY

<http://www.labtestsonline.org.au>

For more information or to register for a My Health Record:

- Go to myhealthrecord.gov.au
- Ask your doctor
- Call 1800 723 471
- Visit a Medicare Office

If you have a complaint or feedback about My Health Record you can:

- Call the My Health Record Help line on 1800 723 471
- Send your complaint to:
My Health Record
PO Box 9942
Sydney NSW 2000
- Contact the Australian Information Commissioner, see <https://www.oaic.gov.au/>