

Health Consumers Queensland submission

Queensland Parliament
Education, Employment and Small Business Committee

Health and Wellbeing Queensland Bill 2019

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About us

Health Consumers Queensland is the peak organisation representing the interests of health consumers and carers in the state. Health Consumers Queensland is a not-for-profit organisation and a registered health promotion charity and we believe in improving health outcomes for people in Queensland.

Consumers are people who use, or are potential users, of health services including their family and carers. Consumers may participate as individuals, groups, organizations of consumers, consumer representatives or communities.

Our priority focus is on consumer engagement that influences and leads improvements and delivers better health outcomes for all Queenslanders. We achieve this through our Queensland-wide health consumer network, tailored training and skills development programs, and maximising opportunities for consumer representation at all levels of the health system.

Consumer engagement is when health consumers actively participate in their own healthcare and in health policy, planning, service delivery and evaluation at service and agency levels.



Our Six Strategic Objectives

1. Enabling health consumers and healthcare staff statewide

We build consumer, staff and system capacity to design a health system together through collaborative, integrated and consumer-centred approaches by providing support, strategic advice, training and advocacy.

2. Acting as an agent of change for consumer-centred health care

In partnership with consumers and healthcare staff, we act as a strong voice on system wide issues to influence key decision makers, policies and models of care to deliver a high quality consumer-centred health care system for all Queenslanders.

3. Enhancing effective partnerships

We develop and grow effective organisational partnerships locally, nationally and internationally to achieve consumer-centred health care for all Queenslanders.

4. Building and using evidence

We support consumers and staff to be involved in co-creating the evidence base for health system development and transformation. We act on the evidence of the human lived experience of the health system to build capacity of consumers and to leverage system change.

5. Being transparent and enduring

We demonstrate transparency and responsiveness on behalf of consumers, community and our funders. We maintain strong leadership and governance to assure organisational sustainability and longevity. We support the passion, energy and courage of our staff and members of our Network.

6. Addressing the social determinants of health

We acknowledge that systemic reform of the health system requires recognising the social determinants of health and co-designing models of care that address them.

Areas of Focus

Our areas of focus in implementing our strategic objectives

In partnership with consumers (including vulnerable groups) and staff, we act as a strong voice on system wide issues such as:

- **Healthcare Rights:** Breaches of healthcare rights which prevent fair, just and affordable access to healthcare;
- **Quality & Safety:** Where quality and safety and/or consumer experiences are of concern;
- **Healthcare Standards:** Embedding healthcare standards around consumer engagement, comprehensive care and health literacy; or
- **Systemic Issues:** Complex, difficult or contentious systemic issues.

Introduction

Our organisation welcomes the opportunity to provide an organisational response to this Bill.

Health Consumers Queensland made a submission in 2017 for the Healthy Futures Commission Queensland Bill 2017 and prior to that provided a submission to the Inquiry into the establishment of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission in 2015. As an organisation that represents health consumers and carers across Queensland, we have always been supportive of a health promotion agency. Our CEO Melissa Fox is a member of the Health and Wellbeing Queensland Advisory Committee, providing high level strategic advice on how to best involve consumers to maximise the impact of the new body.

We support the aims of the health promotion agency, to be known as Health and Wellbeing Queensland (HWQ), as a statutory body and that it will contribute to:

- Improving the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders
- Reducing the risk factors associated with chronic disease; and
- Reducing health inequities.

Our submission covers our support for this agency and some recommendations that will help with governance, independence, transparent decision-making, and ensuring there is clarity of roles and responsibilities.

Our submission is focused on these consumer-focused principles of person-centred, integrated health care:

- Accessibility - safe, affordable and high quality services, treatments, preventative care and health promotion activities.
- Respect - healthcare that meets consumers' unique needs, preferences and values
- Choice – a responsive health system which ensures consumer choices in prevention, treatment and management options
- Participation - patient involvement in health policy to ensure that policies are designed with the patient at the centre.

Recommendations

The recommendations we've made in previous submissions on this still stand (see attached) and below are some additional recommendations we make for this submission:

Recommendation 1:

The Bill should require a Community and Consumer Engagement Strategy and Implementation Plan across all activities, similar to the legislation for the Hospital and Health Services (HHS) Boards. In addition, there should be a requirement for this to be regularly reported on and evaluated.

Recommendation 2:

If a grant program is run from Health and Wellbeing Queensland (HWQ), that there is a transparent and reportable involvement of consumers and community in the governance of the program and in the decision making.

This must include funding applicants demonstrating how they have partnered with consumers and the community to identify needs (based upon evidence), targets and strategies, and will involve them in the implementation and evaluation of their projects.

There needs to be local knowledge and/or consultation involved including on the grant assessment panel to ensure that regional/local specific projects meet the needs of that community and don't unnecessarily replicate/duplicate other programs already successfully running. Local leadership involvement on the panel would best be able to assess whether the winning grants will add value to the community.

Community readiness: We recommend that adequate preparatory work is undertaken with community-based organisations and communities so they are "ready" to plan, develop, implement and evaluate successful place-based, local solutions with strong local involvement. Building community capacity so there are the people, processes and resources to apply and implement the programs of change is essential. Consideration also needs to be given to ensure that the grant program doesn't unnecessarily disadvantage communities with strong demand for health promotion but with low capacity to apply for or implement grants. Community readiness is one way to address this but a systems review to ensure there is equity and fairness in decision-making is important for transparency and community buy-in.

Recommendation 3

In addition to the multi-sector approach that HWQ will take to improve health and wellbeing, we also recommend a cross-government advisory group be established. In order to adequately address the social determinants of health, it will need the proactive support of other key government departments working towards common goals to achieve success.

Recommendation 4

Develop, in collaboration with consumers and communities, a Partnerships Framework with clear protocols and criteria to ensure there are no conflicts of interest when HWQ uses flexible funding models to source private and non-government revenue streams such as corporate partnerships and sponsorships, that there are clear, robust guidelines to ensure there is no conflict of interest, and that it would pass the so-called "pub test".

Recommendation 5

Clarify connections and relationships between Health and Wellbeing Queensland and with the Chief Health Officer, the new Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Officer, HHS Chief Executives, Queensland Mental Health Commission, other key state/federal government agencies and Primary Health Networks.

Conclusion

Health Consumers Queensland supports the proposed Health and Wellbeing Bill 2019. We look forward to continuing to support its work, as the future of Queensland will be shaped by the health and wellbeing of its people at all stages of the health continuum.