

20 August 2014

Ms Anne Dunn
Chairperson
Health Performance Council

By email: hpc@health.sa.gov.au

Dear Ms Dunn

Health Performance Council

The Health Consumers Alliance (HCA) is the peak body for health consumers in South Australia. As an independent alliance of health consumers and health consumer organisations, we work together with our members to achieve our vision of consumers at the heart of health care. A strong and effective voice for the promotion and protection of health consumer wellbeing and rights, HCA promotes health equity and provides systemic advocacy to inform, shape and sustain consumer centred care.

Thank you for the invitation to provide feedback about the performance of the Health Performance Council in the context of the Premier's Review. The Council is to be congratulated for seeing this as an opportunity for continuous improvement and to seek the views of stakeholders in developing its response to the Premier.

HCA is familiar with the brief of the Health Performance Council and the potential for its work as a source of independent advice to the Minister and Parliament on:

- health outcomes
- the operation of the health system and how it is engaging the community
- significant health system issues.

HCA acknowledges the work of the Council that we have had opportunity to provide input to, including:

- Reflecting on Results – Review of the Public Health System for 2008-2010
- State of our Health
- 2011-14 Review of the Health System
- Improving End of Life Care for South Australians.

HCA supports the triangulating of evidence as outlined in your approach to your work. HCA agrees that independent evaluation of the health system is critical, particularly in this time of system reform and funding changes.

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Opportunities for Partnership

In a jurisdiction the size South Australia, the relative ease of conducting business can be an advantage. There are a number of ethical and economic reasons to seek opportunities for collaboration and synergy to achieve the greatest benefit on health expenditure for the citizens of South Australia.

HCA believes that there are greater opportunities for the Health Performance Council to partner with consumers and communities in South Australia through more active engagement with peak bodies and consumers groups in the work of the Council.

We have attempted on at least a couple of occasions to develop a closer collaboration with HPC. On both occasions the response from the HPC was disappointing. HCA would welcome more active communication and engagement from the Council in its future work.

Membership Structure of the Health Performance Council

HCA as a prescribed body under the Health Care Act 2008 has previously expressed concern that the membership of the Council does not include a consumer representative position. We understand the need for a "skills-based Council". However, we believe that effective consumer representation is highly skilled. In our view the lack of an informed consumer perspective, with strong links to consumer leadership in SA, is a critical deficit in the current composition of the Council membership.

It is also out of step with national and international recognition of the need to reorient health services to focus on the needs and wishes of health consumers, their families and carers. The Australian Safety and Quality Framework for Health Care, the Australian Safety and Quality Goals for Health Care, and the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards all recognise the need for health care to be consumer-centred and the importance of partnering with consumers to achieve this.

HCA believes that the work of the Health Performance Council would be enhanced through structural reform to its membership reflecting partnership with consumers.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We have also completed the survey and we are happy for you to share our comments with others.

HCA looks forward to working with you in the future and to hearing the findings from your 2011-2014 review of the health system.

Yours sincerely



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Executive Director

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