



## Consumer and Community Engagement in Health Care

As the peak health consumer body in South Australia, the Health Consumers Alliance of South Australia (HCASA) calls on all health professionals and services to partner with HCASA and South Australian consumers to ensure services are delivering the care people want, need and value.

This position statement outlines the imperative for health, research and other organisations/services to engage and partner with consumers and the community in service planning, design, delivery, monitoring and review to improve the health and wellbeing of all South Australians.

National and local healthcare policy and standards require health services to partner with consumers in the governance and management of health services. The World Health Organisation Declaration of Alma Ata (1978) states that *'The people have a right and a duty to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care.'*

Consumer and community engagement is underpinned by the following legislation, standards and policy;

- *Health Care Act SA 2008 (Governance) Amendment 2018*<sup>i</sup>
  - to meet the responsibilities of Governing Boards engagement strategies which include promoting consultation with health consumers and members of the community about health services in a way that is accessible to them.
- *Statewide Consumer and Community Engagement Strategic Framework (Department for Health and Wellbeing)*<sup>ii</sup>
  - which ensures there are mechanisms in place to actively engage with consumers and the community in order to meet their needs preferences and values and develop appropriate services. The principles values recognise the importance of partnering with consumers and the community and maintaining high quality and efficient health services.
- *National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards 2019 (Australia Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care)*<sup>iii</sup>
  - Which aims to protect the public from harm and to improve the quality of health service provision. In particular

- Standard 1 describes the systems and strategies to use clinical governance systems to improve safety and quality improvement and partner with consumers to set these priorities and
- Standard 2 describes the systems and strategies to create a consumer-centred health system by including consumers in the development and codesign of quality health care.

Health service governance and management must be informed and influenced by all people with lived experience, especially the most vulnerable individuals and groups, consumer advocates and representatives and the general public. Strategies must ensure people who are least likely to be heard inform the removal of barriers to safe, quality health care for all South Australians.

These partnerships must genuinely reflect the needs, preferences and values of the people who use them and the communities who fund them. This means effective partnerships use structured, systemic approaches that engage:

- individuals with lived experience of health conditions and services (consumers/patients, their family and carers)
- people trained and supported to consult with and represent their communities (consumer representatives). These communities can bring together:
  - people with shared lived experience, including patient organisations
  - people with shared access needs, for example cognitive and sensory support needs
  - groups who share life circumstances for example age; family context; geographic location; socio economic issues; risk factors such as domestic violence
  - groups who share culture, values and beliefs
- people who fund and expect to be able to access health services when they need them (the general public).

## **Health Consumers Alliance of SA Inc (HCASA)**

### **Vision:**

Consumers at the centre of health in South Australia

### **Mission:**

To engage consumers and health services to achieve high quality, safe, consumer-centred care for all South Australians. We promote and strengthen the voices, wellbeing, rights and leadership of health consumers.

HCASA is the peak body for health consumers in South Australia. Since 2002, HCASA has worked in partnership with individual consumers, carers and advocates; with consumer groups and committees; with communities; and with a rich and diverse range of partners to fulfil our mission.

Together, we advocate at the system level to embed consumer engagement policy and practice across the SA health system. This includes public, private and non-government health and community service providers.

### See also

#### HCASA

- Consumer Centred Health Care in South Australia
- Working with Health Consumer Advocates and Representatives
- Consumer Sitting Fees and Reimbursement

### Refer

- Health Care Act 2008 (Governance) Amendment 2019
- National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards second edition Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care 2019
- HCSCC Charter of Health and Community Services Rights in South Australia 2011
- Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care August 2019
- The National Health and Medical Research Council and Consumers Health Forum of Australia Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Research

### August 2019

---

<sup>i</sup> Health Care Act 2008 (Governance) Amendment 2019

<sup>ii</sup> Department for Health and Wellbeing Statewide Consumer and Community Engagement Strategic Framework 2019

<sup>iii</sup> Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards second edition 2019