

Health Consumers' Council

Consumer Representative Payment Policy

Background

The Health Consumers' Council supports health consumers on a number of local and state committees.

Most consumer representatives, with the exception of those appointed to State Registration Boards or involved with Divisions of General Practice, are not paid for their participation.

Mental health consumers, registered with the Mental Health Consumer Participation Program, receive payment for participating in a decision-making committee

Definition

Consumer representatives are members of a group, however titled (eg committee, working group, Board, focus group, etc.), considering health policy, planning, implementation, service and review.

A consumer representative is a person who brings a consumer perspective to matters under consideration and takes part in the decision-making process. This includes:

- Presenting how consumers may feel and think about certain issues
- Contributing the consumer experience
- Providing information about relevant issues affecting consumers

Consumer representatives should be an active member of a consumer organization.

Rationale

HCC endorses the principle of payment to consumer representatives as an acknowledgement of their expertise and the value of the consumer input.

Remuneration/reimbursement puts the consumer representative on a similar footing to other participants and makes the consumer opinion as valuable as that of others.

HCC does not want the issue of payment to become a barrier to consumer participation and accepts the participation, not payment, is the key issue.

Policy

HCC considers the importance of acknowledgement of consumer expertise and the value of consumer input should be rewarded and thus recognised by health agencies.

Consumer representatives have the right to accept or refuse payment for their participation.

Policy Implementation

HCC will promote this policy through *Health Matters*, the Department of Health and health-related agencies.

The Council, when approached by agencies for participants to sit on health-related bodies, will encourage these agencies to consider payment for the consumer representative(s).

HCC will advocate for consumer payments.

Recommended Payment Guide

Recommended rates will include recognition of effort and out-of-pocket expenses similar to the model of the Mental Health Consumers Participation:

Minimum rate for first hour (or part thereof)	\$25.00
Minimum rate for two (2) hours (or part thereof)	\$50.00
Hourly rate after first two hours	\$20.00

Policy to be reviewed	May 2003
Reviewed:	2003
Reviewed:	2008
Review again:	2010