

RESPONSE: WA ABORIGINAL PRIMARY CARE

ACTION PLAN: FIRST ROUND CONSULTATION

MAY 2006

The Health Consumers' Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Aboriginal Primary Care Action Plan.

Background

The Health Consumers' Council is an independent community based organisation, representing the consumers' 'voice' in health policy, planning, research and service delivery. The Council advocates on behalf of consumers to government, doctors, other health professionals, hospitals and the wider health system. Funded by the Department of Health WA, the Council provides a state wide service. To find out more you can check our website www.hcc-wa.global.net.au.

Comment

p.10 Principles

The Health Consumers Council recommends that the principles include a recognition of the patient/family/community focus of this document, and the right to seamless, co-ordinated integrated care. A barrier to such care is the multitude of government agencies, funding streams, programme duplication. We suggest a principle or strong opening comment that recognises the need to improve Commonwealth/State Communication and Integration in policy, planning and services to make Aboriginal Primary Health patient /person focused rather than service focused.

p.12 & 13 Documents?

The Health Consumers' Council can only reiterate so many documents, so little change.

p.15 Life Course Approach

The Health Consumers' Council recommends that this section could be improved by the inclusion of partnerships between individuals/families and health practitioners and between health service organisation and community including Community Controlled Aboriginal Health Services. We note the reference to Community Advisory Councils (p.24)) but believe this should be foregrounded in this section. "Localised decision making" is not only about the Board of the local AMS, but has broader more inclusive community participation as its goal.

p.17 Building Health Services

The Health Consumers' Council recommends that patient transport within metro area, within country towns, between country towns, between country towns and regional centres and between country towns and the metro area is a Critical Health Issue for Aboriginal People.

In addition, the delay in developing a Patient-Centred Patient Assisted Travel Scheme is of ongoing concern to rural patients and their families.

3. The much discussed but not yet implemented Meet and Greet Scheme, all impacts on Primary Healthcare for Aboriginal people.

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p.23 Partnership and Engagement

The Health Consumers' Council recommends additional investment be considered to strengthen the capacity of local service providers and Aboriginal communities to plan and deliver high quality, safe primary health care:

- including staff exchange;

- pathways of care for people from primary, secondary and tertiary care and ensure safe return to community care.

4. boundaries and provide advice to all health services in a designated area/region/district.

In addition, the Health Consumers' Council strongly recommends that WA Health become a lead agency in Aboriginal employment and training in all parts and at all levels of health services. WA Health should develop a set of employment targets for Aboriginal people in all capital works programmes being funded over the next 10 years.

WA Health should have a philosophy that "if we are building we are involving Aboriginal people" by providing employment opportunities.