

Questions about Care Opinion from the Consumer Representative Networking session 23/09/20

- What happened to the dash board??
 - The dashboard is produced by WA Health
https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Care-Opinion-Dashboard
- Do health providers have to agree to promote the fact that they are signed up to the service I have been a patient of multiple WA hospitals none of which have told me about it.
 - It's not mandated for HSPs to promote the service but it seems odd that they don't. Perhaps inform them that you would have liked to be informed. Nothing like a gentle reminder to them.
- The compulsory aspect is just for public hospitals - Is that correct? What is private hospital participation like?
 - Poor participation from private hospitals. I would guess they are quite fearful of transparency and the public nature of the site.
- Is there a potential for bias? If a service has a happy customer, they are told about Care Opinion, if they are unhappy they are 'directed' through other means?
 - This is always a potential bias, but anyone can go on to the Care Opinion site and post their story. They don't have to be invited.
- Do we need more than-- Yes/No answers to replies from ops manager or Regional Directors?
 - Usually the responses from HSPs are much more detailed than a yes/no. We encourage to them really think about their response and we send them guidelines to help with this. Ultimately, it's really up to the HSP how they want to respond. Also, there is an opportunity for the storyteller and general public to say whether they found the response helpful.....this might be a driver for better responses.
- Does the Department of health use this as a way of monitoring the performance of different Health Service providers? Even if do not measure performance re what patients are saying should measure whether tell patients about it and elicit opinion.
 - Not really a performance measure as we know them, but more about the willingness of HSPs to engage in public online feedback. However, there are indicators on the dashboard that we consider is a step in the right direction of more effective consumer engagement
- How does Care Opinion interface with the existing reporting mechanisms in hospitals, the consumer bodies, complaints etc
 - HCC response: Anonymous complaints – like those submitted via Care Opinion – are required to be reported under the WA Health Complaints Management Policy. See <https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/About-us/Policy-frameworks/Clinical-Governance-Safety-and-Quality/Mandatory-requirements/Complaints-Management-Policy>
 - Some health services involve their consumer and community committees in reviewing stories on Care Opinion. Some health services also ask their consumer and community committees to review responses to complaints.
- What about promoting it to consumer organisations? Online and face to face Support and service providing groups and not for profits for particular consumers, issues etc

- We would welcome consumer organisations promoting Care Opinion among their members. We can even provide mechanisms for their website that would help this (AT NO COST). Care Opinion platform has lots of functions that consumer organisations would find helpful (eg a campaigns function)
- Where do primary care complaints go? Does Care Opinion apply in primary care sector?
 - Care Opinion can certainly help primary care but there has been very little uptake by this sector. I think largely because it is run by small private enterprises who are not overly fond of transparency as a rule.
- RE AHPRA if take complaint via Care Opinion will they pick it up and potentially investigate practitioner
 - Care Opinion does not post stories about individual practitioners – or at least it doesn't name them in the public domain. If it was a serious complaint, we would notify the provider or inform the storyteller to contact AHPRA or other complaint bodies.
- I am also wondering if Care Opinion is mandatory for private hospitals?
 - Sadly not
- So is there an issue here if we encourage people to all go to Care Opinion rather than through Patient Liaison Service etc systemic issues will not be noticed or issues real safety concern may not be investigated?
 - That's one of the many advantages of Care Opinion – we can include the Patient Liaison Service as watchers on the site so that they would all be notified when stories were posted. And they could generate reports that would pick up system issues.

Responses by Clare Mullen, Health Consumer's Council WA, and Michael Greco, Care Opinion

Clare.mullen@hconc.org.au