

## Summary of Discussions

### CONSUMER REFERENCE GROUP

#### Meeting held Friday 28th August 2015

##### New Business:

##### **2.1 Report on PHN (Primary Health Network) Consumer Group transition from Medicare Local**

Joe reported that the consumer group was set up by advertising for positions. Each of the LGAs (local government agencies) are to have 3 representatives making a total of 12 members. The chair will be appointed by the Board making 13 members in total. Michael reported that he had argued that Penrith needed more reps on CAC because Penrith has the services that other areas even Lithgow want and need to use.

##### **2.4 Report from Nepean GP Network Board**

Michael reported that there was continuing discussion on the choice of pictures to be used for a pull up banners. He tabled a page of photos for the banners for our consideration.

##### **2.5 Consider and understand Consumers expectations under the provisions of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights (ACHR). What does it mean in practice? Where can patients go if they are not happy?**

Michael tabled copies of the ACHR and an actual ongoing case study for discussion. There was a comment that although this particular charter had been in place since 2008 it was hardly visible and often not implemented.

This charter is applicable to all health settings in Australia:

- public hospitals
- private hospitals
- multipurpose services
- general practices (accredited every 3 years)
- specialist rooms
- day procedure facilities
- community health centres
- private allied health providers e.g. physiotherapists, psychologists and anyone else who can bulk bill.

## **Partnership**

Patients and consumers staff and health service organisations all have a role in contributing to a safe and high quality health care system.

In a genuine partnership healthcare providers need to be aware of the need of communication with consumers, understand the rights of the patient and help the patients, consumers and their families to obtain the best outcome. Health services organisations need to be working in partnership with consumers.

## **Case study**

In this particular real life case every aspect of the charter seemed to be violated including Access, Safety, Respect, and Communication. For instance in the latter case despite time and again being asked NOT to transfer the patient to what was considered an unsuitable hospital because of previous experience with this level of care, it was done without due consultation and consideration of the whole of person needs.

The comment was that the consumer's rights were ignored and the health system was fragmented with no proper communication between services. It seems that the feedback is being lost in the mire.

Concern was expressed on the adverse treatment and breakdown on real communication on the mental and emotional wellbeing of both patient and carer.

Cathy also commented on her own recent experience where her and her husband's rights and more especially, safety were ignored.

## **SUMMARY**

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights:

1. has been endorsed by all Health Ministers for use in Australians.
2. All participants have a role in ensuring the rights described in Charter are realised.
3. This should contribute to a safe and high quality healthcare system.
4. It needs to be further promoted within the health industry and to consumers.

## **Other Business**

- Change of name and Logo for the Nepean GP Network. This is now complete. The input by the CRG was well received and appreciated by the Board.
- It was considered that the words Advocate, Communicate and Educate should be included in promotional material.
- Renaming of Consumer Reference Group: All voted to keep the present name.
- Social Media Opportunities: It was decided to wait until the Website has been finalised.
- Noting the group's serious need for more members, Michael said that he has someone in mind as an Indigenous representative.