

3 March 2016

Capital Health Network
Corner of Strickland Crescent and Geils Court
Deakin ACT 2600

By email

Attention: Angelene True

Community Advisory Council – comments on Consumer Engagement Framework and Partnering with Consumers

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the documents provided by email on Monday 22 February 2016.

In framing our response we referred to the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards to identify how the standards include carers (<http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/NSQHS-Standards-Sept-2012.pdf>), and these are outlined below:

Under *Roles for Safety and Quality in Health Care* (p6):

Patients and carers have an important role to play in the safe delivery of health care. As a partner with health service organisations and their healthcare providers, patients and carers will be involved in making decisions for service planning, developing models of care, measuring service and evaluating systems of care. They will also participate in making decisions about their own health care and for this they will need to know and exercise their healthcare rights and be engaged in their health care and treatment decisions. Patients and carers will have a need to access information about options and agreed treatment plans. Health care can be improved when patients and carers share – with their health care provider – issues that may impact on their compliance with treatment plans.

The *clinical workforce* ... When the clinical workforce forms partnerships with patients and carers, not only can a patient's experience of care be improved, but the design and planning of organisational processes, safety systems, quality initiatives and training can be more effective as well.

Health service managers and *The role of health service executives and owners* also include the benefits of carer partnerships e.g ... carers in safety, models of care, program design and review of the organisations performance is key to the establishment of effective partnerships with health service managers and the clinical workforce.

Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Service Organisations Standard 1 (pp 20-21) includes carers in several actions e.g relating to partnership with patients and carers, and in

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consistency with the current national charter of healthcare rights, implementing processes to enable partnerships in decisions about their care ...

Partnering with Consumers Standard 2 (p22) identifies carers as partners in care.

Comments on emailed CHN documents

Carers ACT suggests that the inclusion of carers, similar to the above Standards, would enhance the CHN's Partnering with Consumers policy and procedure documents and would better reflect the intent of the above Standards.

- Policy document

While carers are acknowledged in the policy we believe the Policy could be strengthened and be more meaningful to carers and other stakeholders by including recognition of carers, particularly their role as partners in care similar to the NSQHS Standards above. It may also be useful to add definitions about carers, consumers etc in the Policy and reference to the *Carer Recognition Act 2010 (Cth)* and *The Statement for Australia's Carers* that acknowledge carers as partners in care (<https://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2010A00123>).

- Partnering with Consumers

While this document outlines the purpose of the proposed consultation about Partnering with Consumers it does not include carers. As one of the purposes of this document identified in the first dot point under Recommendations is "the assessment of compliance with Version 2 of the NSQHS Standard - Partnering with Consumers and suggested areas for improvement" it does provide an opportunity in the items under Discussion to address the inclusion of carers in line with the *Carer Recognition Act 2010 (Cth)* and *The Statement for Australia's Carers*.

While carers are consumers in their own right, Carers ACT believes the policy about partnering with consumers will be strengthened by including recognition that carers have the right to be considered partners in care. This inclusion could sit under 2. Key Issues that identifies in 2.4 CHN is looking to identify areas of improvement.

- Partnering with Consumers Attachment A Standard PC Compliance and Areas for Development Status and Improvement

Again, we recommend that these documents can be strengthened by the inclusion of carers as partners of care. For example, in the Partnering with consumers in their care Standard below or in the Standard PC: Partnering with consumers introductory comments and the standard's purpose.

- Partnering with Consumers Policy Attachment B

We were pleased to see that this document includes carers in several areas e.g under Purpose:

This policy is designed, in conjunction with the Partnering with Consumers – A Framework for Consumer Engagement, to guide consumer participation in CHN processes and decision-making as it relates to strategic planning, commissioning and improvement initiatives that affect citizens, communities, consumers and carers.

And, also in the Principles and Policy sections. Under the section Best Practice Approach it identifies CHN has adopted a standards driven approach encompassing three standards, including Partners with Consumers – see comments above. In Roles and Responsibilities it includes:

Others employees: adheres to the principles and aims of this policy and ensures they operate in accordance with the Partnering with Consumers framework; actively enhance a participatory culture at CHN by supporting, reporting on and contributing to consumer engagement activities and supporting consumers and carers to provide feedback on service system experiences; develop and maintain their own skills and knowledge of engagement best practice, relevant to their role.

- Partnering with Consumers Strategic Approach and Performance Framework – Attachment D

Includes carer engagement in CHN's strategic planning, commissioning and improvement initiatives.

- Partnering with Consumers Draft Engagement Plan – Attachment E

Includes carer engagement in CHN's consultation.

Carers ACT also suggests that the development of a policy or position statement by the Capital Health Network to identify the role of carers as partners in care and carer recognition (in accordance with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards and the *Carer Recognition Act 2010 (Cth)* and *The Statement for Australia's Carers*) for use by the organisation and CHN's other stakeholders would complement CHN's Partnering with Consumers direction. Such a policy or position statement could also include the need for carers to be assisted by health professionals to maintain their own health and wellbeing, as it is well documented that many carers experience poorer health than non carers.

We hope these comments are helpful.

Dee McGrath
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