Health Consumers Queensland: Consumer engagement in Primary Health, and Consumer Representatives Program

Presentation to

General Practice Queensland Divisions Forum: Our Community: Our Future

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What is Health Consumers Queensland

• Health Consumers Queensland (HCQ) was established to contribute to the continued development and reform of health systems and services in Queensland.

• HCQ’s work is informed by Queensland health consumers, and builds upon the work of existing health consumer groups, community organisations, government agencies and health professional bodies.

• HCQ comprises a Ministerial Consumer Advisory Committee.

• Committee represents the diversity of Queensland health consumers – range of life stages, health populations and social groups.

• Supported by a small Secretariat – Paige Armstrong, Director.
Mission Statement

“Health Consumers Queensland supports the voices of Queensland consumers to achieve better health outcomes”
What we do? We....

- provide strategic advice on health policies and initiatives and undertake systemic advocacy from a consumer perspective

- support health consumers to engage with government and community on health issues

- coordinate a Consumer Network and Representatives Program

- undertake initiatives and develop resources to strengthen individual, family and systems health advocacy

- work collaboratively with Health Community Councils around consumer health issues
Who is a health consumer?

Health Consumers Queensland identifies health consumers as people who use, or are potential users of health services, including their family and carers. Consumers may participate as individuals, groups, organisations of consumers, consumer representatives or communities.
How do we define a carer?

Someone who provides, in a non-contractual and unpaid capacity, ongoing care or assistance to another person who, because of disability, frailty, chronic illness or pain, requires assistance with everyday tasks: Carers (Recognition) Act 2008
What is a community?

Groups of people or organisations with a common interest. They may:

- connect through a local or regional interest in health;
- share a cultural background, religion or language;
- be geographically dispersed but linked through an interest in a specific health issue.

What is consumer engagement?

- Health consumers being involved in their own health care and treatment and in the planning and development of health policies, service planning, implementation and evaluation

- A broad way to cover the range of activities used by governments, organisations and individuals to generate consumer input in or discussion about policy

Why engage with consumers?

• Supports international and national best practice

• Reflects the direction of the national and state health reform agendas

• Improves the quality and safety of healthcare, services and the health system

• Ensures policies, programs and services are responsive and targeted to individual and community needs

• Empowers consumers to be active and informed decision-makers in their own healthcare and to partner with providers around those decisions
How do consumers engage?

- Individually
- With local service/s
- Regionally
- At a State and/or National level
HCQ’s draft model of consumer engagement

(adapted from the World Health Organisation and International Association of Public Participation models)
HCQ’s draft model: Elements of engagement

1. Information — assists consumers and community to understand issues and policy directions.

2. Consultation — consumer’s views and experiences of the health system and services are sought and discussed.

3. Involvement — consumer’s views and issues are directly reflected in health policies and initiatives.

4. Collaboration — consumers and stakeholders work together to develop solutions to achieve better health outcomes.

5. Empowerment — consumers solely determine solutions about health issues and initiatives.
Key issues to consider: positive engagement processes

- What is the purpose of this engagement exercise?
- Who are the target community/consumers?
- Who are the related stakeholders?
- What is the degree of interest in participation from this group’s perspective?
- What is the most appropriate engagement strategy for this particular group?
- What outcomes are needed from this exercise?
- How can I maximise the ability of consumers to participate?
- What resources are needed?
National Health & Hospitals Reform

- Support Comprehensive Primary Health Care Centres and Services, provided that consumers are consulted that services are based on a broad view of primary health care that goes beyond GP services.

- Welcome strategies that will encourage health professionals to work together and collaborate for better health outcomes for their patients.

- Support the recommendations relating to e-health.
Questions?