

CHF calls for Australian Government to fund public education campaign about Medicare

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Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) has called on the Australian Government to fund a public education campaign that fully explains the Medicare system to the general public.

CHF, Australia's peak body for health consumers, said many people only think of Medicare as helping to fund their GP visits.

The ***Understanding Medicare – Understanding your health*** campaign, which is part of [CHF's 2024-25 Budget submission](#), would also give consumers the health literacy tools to help them save money, navigate the health system and improve their health.

"When we talk to Australian health consumers about Medicare, they tell us about how much they like their little green card and the certainty it gives them knowing that if they get sick, they can get the help they need.

"But what we are also hearing from consumers is that the health system is so complex that they don't understand everything that Medicare entitles them to," said CHF CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny.

Dr Deveny said that Medicare's popularity demonstrates Australians' support for our universal healthcare system, which should not be taken for granted.

"The universality of Medicare is under threat. CHF is concerned by some of the commentary that has emerged in the sector over the last few years which is viewing Medicare as a safety net for the most disadvantaged,

and not as a universal access scheme for all. Those that believe in universal healthcare should take note of this and not let our current system be eroded,” said Dr Deveny.

Dr Deveny’s comments come ahead of Medicare’s 40th anniversary on 1 February. On 31 January, CHF will host a meeting of consumer and medical bodies to acknowledge the 40 years of Medicare and discuss where improvements can be made to strengthen the Medicare system.

“Medicare must ensure it can keep up with the changing health needs of Australians. One area we want to see continued improvement in is the support for people with a or multiple chronic health conditions, some of that work is underway but we want to discuss as a sector what more can be done to ensure Medicare remains fit-for-purpose.

“We also can’t forget the mouth. The dental system in Australia is not where it should be for a country like ours – how can Medicare be enhanced to help people afford and access oral health,” said Dr Deveny.

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