



Australian Health Care Reform Alliance

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Health reform must deliver universal access to health services

New findings show that the people who pay for and use health services prize one value over all others: access to health care for everyone.

This is one of the headline results from community consultations held across four states, the full results of which will be presented today to participants at the National Health Reform Summit at Old Parliament House in Canberra.

Spokesperson for the Australian Health Care Reform Alliance, Jill Sewell, said 'three quarters of the participants said that affordability alone was a central measure of the health system and two thirds said that other factors affecting access, like the location of services, were crucial.

'These results underline what I think most Australians know – that the first principle of our health system is to deliver universal access to good quality care, irrespective of where people live or their social status.'

'We don't have universal access and there needs to be a fresh approach to make it happen. Tinkering around the edges is not good enough.'

The National Summit will push forward national debate about health reform and show what a better health system would look like and how will we make progress towards it.

A **Communiqué** outlining the suggested directions for reform will be issued at a press conference at 3.00pm on Tuesday 31 July at Old Parliament House.

Speakers on the first day of the Summit include John Menadue, Stephen Leeder and Tom Calma.

Menadue will tell the Summit that there needs to be structural change and not continual incremental change to address the major problems in the health system.

Says Menadue, 'health ministers are too close to the powerful vested interests in health and that is why other forces must be brought to bear to ensure the public interest is served, for example through engagement with the wider community and with Treasury and Finance ministries.'

Professor Leeder will talk about re-orienting the health system to care for the growing number of people living with chronic conditions like arthritis, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer.

'We must learn new strategies to enable people with these health problems to enjoy good quality of life. For my money, we can optimize the patient journey best by attending to the medical and social needs of each individual with chronic illness, and ensuring the primacy of communication' says Leeder.

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Attachments: Summit Program, Leeder Abstract, Menadue Paper



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Allied Health Professions Australia, Audiology Australia, Australian College of Midwives, Australian Council of Social Service, Australian Healthcare Association, Australian Health Promotion Association, Australian Nursing Federation, Australian Physiotherapy Association, Australian Rural Health Education Network, Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation, Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation, Catholic Health Australia, Centre for Clinical Governance Research (UNSW), Centre for Health Services Research: USYD, Chiropractors' Association of Australia, CHOICE, Chronic Illness Alliance, Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association, Continence Foundation of Australia, Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia, Country Women's Association of Australia, Doctors Reform Society, Frontier Services of the Uniting Church, Health Consumers' Council WA, Health Consumers Network, Health Issues Centre, Health Reform SA, Maternity Coalition, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, National Council for Intellectual Disability, National Public Hospitals Clinicians' Taskforce, National Rural Health Alliance, NSW Nurses Association, OT Australia, Public Health Association of Australia, Public Hospitals Health and Medicare Alliance, RBC Division of General Practice, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Rural Doctors Association of Australia, Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health, South Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association, Tasmanian Medicare Action Group, Victorian Medicare Action Group.