

## **Health Care Rights Driving Consumer Centred Care in South Australia**

### **Health Consumer Advocacy Network of South Australia**

The Health Consumer Advocacy Network of South Australia (Health **CAN SA**- the Network) is a group of health consumers who believe the people, who pay for, fund and use health services in South Australia should be able to inform and influence how those services are designed and delivered.

The Network provides an independent health consumer voice in South Australia to inform government, service providers and policy makers about the experiences, issues and concerns of health consumers and contributes to shared planning and problem solving. Since the closure of HCASA in October 2020 the Network is committed to ensuring independent health consumer advocacy continues in South Australia.

### **Our Position**

Health CAN SA recognises and promotes the growing body of evidence that partnering with health consumers ensures greater access and equity, safety and quality in health care, and improves health outcomes.

The Network endorses and supports the Joint Statement made between The Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC) and Health Consumers Alliance of South Australia (HCASA) in September 2020.

In supporting this Joint Statement, the Network calls on government, health service providers and quality assessors, to ensure that consumers' health care rights are protected and enshrined in health care policy and demonstrate evidence that consumer rights are met and measured by consumer experience.

June 2021

## Joint Statement

# Health Care Rights Driving Consumer Centred Care in South Australia

The Health Consumers Alliance of South Australia (HCASA) and the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC), are committed to ensuring all health services, policy-makers and researchers in South Australia partner with consumers to ensure South Australians understand their health care rights.

This joint statement outlines the opportunity for health care professionals, services and researchers to position consumers at the centre of health, to ensure they have a powerful influence on the health services they pay for, use and expect and so to support the health and wellbeing of all South Australians. In doing so, health services can actively implement organisation and system-wide actions that embed the health care rights that underpin consumer centred care.

Local and national healthcare legislation, policy, standards and rights require health services to partner with consumers in their own care and in the governance and management of health services. National research and guidelines require partnerships with consumers so that their ‘unique and valuable insights [inform how] research is framed, conducted and translated, helping to ensure research quality and relevance’.

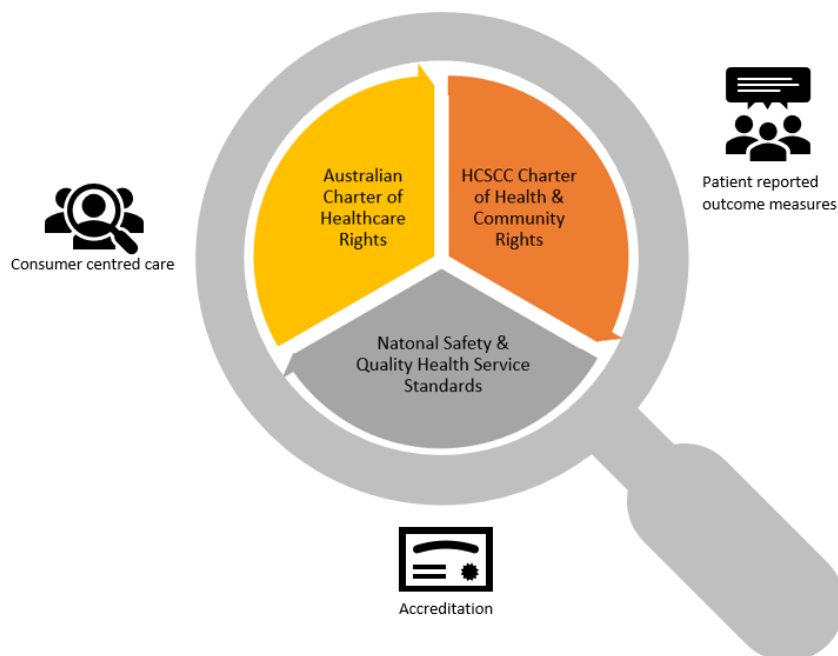
The World Health Organisation *Declaration of Alma Ata* (1978) states that ‘*The people have a right and a duty to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care.*’<sup>i</sup>

The HCSCC’s *Charter of Health and Community Services Rights in South Australia*<sup>ii</sup> enshrines in legislation the principles and values of consumer engagement and health and community service’s obligations. It sets out the rights of all people who use health and community services in South Australia and to the family members, carers and nominees who act on behalf of a person seeking or using a service. This Charter complements the *Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights*<sup>iii</sup>.

The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care’s (ACSQHC) *Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights* describes the rights of consumers/patients and other people using the Australian health system and to make sure that wherever and whenever care is provided, it is of high quality and is safe.

The ACSQHC's *National Safety & Quality Health Service Standards*<sup>iv</sup>, endorsed by all Australian Health Ministers, describe the imperative for health services to implement organisation-wide systems for partnering with consumers and for consumer centred care. The Standards aim to protect the public from harm and to improve the quality of health service provision. They provide a quality assurance mechanism that tests whether relevant systems are in place to ensure that expected standards of safety and quality are met. Standard 2: *Partnering with Consumers* outlines health services' use of a Charter of Rights, consistent with the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, that is easily accessible for patients, carers, familiar and consumers.

The Charters and the National Standards provide a framework that acts as a comprehensive tool to assess health systems and services' capacity to partner with consumers. The relationship between the healthcare rights and health service standards, enshrines value-based health care and ensures health services responsibility to demonstrate evidence informed and measured by consumer experience.



Health services that achieve accreditation against the National Standards must provide evidence of ensuring consumer's healthcare rights are met. Where consumers report care that enables:

- access,
- provides safe, high quality care,
- is respectful of culture, values and belief,
- facilitates their active participation and partners with them in their own care,
- provides clear and relevant information in a form that is accessible to them,
- protects their privacy, and
- supports and facilitates them to provide comment, feedback and complaint, then this is evidence of consumer centred care.

Integrating the Charters of Rights into:

- health service outcomes reporting,
  - accreditation agency assessment processes and criteria,
  - patient reported outcome measures,
  - consumer centred care and consumer participation policy and mechanisms,
  - consumer and patient information resources,
  - consumer feedback and complaints mechanisms,
  - consumer engagement strategies and action plans and
  - consumer-centred quality improvement tools,
- ensures health services partner with consumers in care delivery, decision-making and evaluation and ensures accreditation is values and outcomes focused.

Partnering with consumers and consumer centred care are key drivers for achieving better health outcomes and cost efficiency and effectiveness in health care.

### **Health Consumers Alliance of SA Inc (HCASA)**

**Vision:** consumers at the centre of health in South Australia

**Mission:** to engage consumers and health services to achieve high quality, safe, consumer-centred care for all South Australians. We promote and strengthen the voices, wellbeing, rights and leadership of health consumers.

HCASA was the peak body for health consumers in South Australia. Since 2002, HCASA worked in partnership with individual consumers, carers and advocates; with consumer groups and committees; with communities; and with a rich and diverse range of partners to fulfil its mission.

In 2019 the South Australian government made a decision to cease funding health consumer partnerships at a statewide level. As a result, the Health Consumers Alliance of South Australia (HCASA) ended in September 2020. After nearly 20 years there is no longer independent, systemic health consumer advocacy in South Australia to inform health policy.

### **South Australian Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC)**

The office of the South Australian Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner is an independent, statutory office established by the *Health and Community Services Complaints Act 2004*.

The HCSCC helps consumers, carers and service providers – this includes government, private and non-government health and community services – to try and resolve complaints. The HCSCC;

- receive, assess and resolve complaints about health and community services in South Australia.
- improve the safety and quality of health and community services in South Australia.

- identify, investigate and report on systemic issues of concern in health and community services.
- promote good complaint handling.
- monitor trends in health and community services complaints and recommend improvements.
- provide information, education and advice about:
  - health and community service rights and responsibilities
  - The HCSCC *Charter of Health and Community Services Rights*
  - complaints and good complaint handling
- provide assistance to service providers with complaints.

The HCSCC has a statutory relationship with the national health practitioner registration boards through the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

The HCSCC also maintains links with diverse health and community service providers and organisations representing the interests of consumers and carers, including people with special needs.

**(updated) September 2020**

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<sup>i</sup> Declaration of Alma-Ata World Health Organisation International Conference of Primary Health Care September 1978

<sup>ii</sup> Charter of Health and Community Services Rights in South Australia Health and Community Service Rights in South Australia 2011

<sup>iii</sup> Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care (second edition) August 2019

<sup>iv</sup> Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards second edition 2019