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Re: Consultation on the CHS Volunteer Services Policy

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the review of the Canberra Health Services (CHS) Volunteer Services Policy.

The Health Care Consumers' Association (HCCA) is a health promotion agency and the peak consumer advocacy organisation in the Canberra region. HCCA provides a voice for consumers on local health issues and provides opportunities for health care consumers to participate in all levels of health service planning, policy development and decision making.

For this consultation HCCA engaged with members of our Health of Older People Consumer Reference Group, Access and Design Consumer Reference Group, and consumers who have a particular interest in volunteering. We also received feedback from the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra (MCCI – PICAC NSW/ACT).

Volunteers play an important role in our health system, including in our hospitals. Given this valuable role, it is vital to have a CHS policy supporting consumers and staff in volunteering. Consumers told us that it was great to see that induction of volunteers, working with vulnerable people, along with workplace health and safety (including confidentiality) were all covered in this policy.

Consumer feedback we received indicated that consumers were generally comfortable with the Volunteer Services Policy. Specific comments received included:

- The Reportable Conduct Schemeⁱ requirements should be included as part of this policy and in information provided by CHS for volunteers.
- A consumer suggested that in the last paragraph of the policy statement, a sentence be added regarding vaccination status. This could be along the lines of “In addition, in areas of infection risk, volunteers should undertake a vaccination screening and be offered any vaccines appropriate to their work” (or whatever is considered by the health service to be an appropriate statement to make for volunteers). This might include encouraging flu and COVID vaccinations, and offering these free of charge to volunteers (as is the

case for staff). This would form part of the volunteer recruitment paper work, covered in the dot points on p2 for 'Volunteer Services' to add 'vaccination screening', and be referenced to at other points in the document, such as under 'Volunteer responsibilities'.

- It is not clear in the policy as to whether the Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for developing rosters for volunteers (p3).
- The training hub 'capailiti' should use a capital 'C' to be clear that this is the name of the program (p4).
- A number of consumers noted acronyms in the document that needed to be defined at their first reference (e.g. CAS, COP, CRCC).
- It is good to see that volunteers are provided with a COP (Conditions of Placement) document. Consumers wanted to ensure that this document includes information on volunteer rights and responsibilities. If there is a template or link to a template for staff then this could be a useful addition to the policy.

Final remarks

We thank you again for the opportunity to review this policy and to provide consumer input. We look forward to seeing how our comments shape the final document once the consultation is complete.

Yours sincerely



Darlene Cox
19 March 2021

¹ The Reportable Conduct Scheme (ACT Ombudsman) <https://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/improving-the-act/reportable-conduct>