



## 9.1 Community Development Policy

### A. Introduction

1. Community development is a process where community members are supported to identify and take collective action on issues which are important to them. Community development considers community members to be experts in their lives and communities, and values their knowledge and wisdom<sup>1</sup>. It also empowers community members and creates stronger and more connected communities.
2. Health is a basic human right and is essential for social and economic development. HCCA is a health promotion organisation that advocates for the inclusion and active participation of consumers in all levels of health service planning, policy development and decision making. A main focus of HCCA is to empower consumers to have control and understanding of their own health and increase their awareness of, and ability to influence the social determinants of health<sup>2</sup> to promote better health outcomes and wellbeing in our communities. Community development is an important element of our work.

### B. Purpose

3. The purpose of this policy is to outline the ways in which HCCA staff, Executive Committee and members promote collective action to reduce health inequities and contribute to the development of communities in the ACT and surrounding region.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Family Studies (2017), access in March 2022 <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/expert-panel-project/what-community-development>

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization (2022), Social determinants of health, accessed in February 2022 [https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/social-determinants-of-health#tab=tab_1)

## C. Principles

4. HCCA acts in accordance with our strategic plan, constitutional objectives, the Ottawa Charter<sup>3</sup> and Jakarta Declaration<sup>4</sup>. HCCA is committed to the following principles:
  - I. **Achieving equity in health:** HCCA is committed to providing support, information and advice to reduce differences in health status to enable all people in the ACT and region to have equal opportunities to develop and maintain their health and wellbeing.
  - II. **Advocacy:** HCCA advocates to ensure that economic, social, cultural, environmental, political and biological factors are advantageous for improved health outcomes for all members of our communities. HCCA also aims to contribute to positive changes to legislation, policies, service delivery, infrastructure, community behavior and attitudes in all levels of government.
  - III. **Capacity building:** HCCA provides consumers with relevant health information, developing sustainable skills and resources to enhance their capacity to participate in community life to their fullest.
  - IV. **Consumer empowerment:** HCCA supports consumers to be in control of their own health by having the knowledge, skills and confidence to make decisions affecting their health and wellbeing.
  - V. **Responsive and sensitive health services:** HCCA participates in policy development, service planning and evaluation of services to ensure that health services are sensitive and respectful of the cultural needs of our communities.
  - VI. **Collaboration:** HCCA works collaboratively with our members, the general public, ACT Government, private health institutions, social and health care professionals and policy makers to ensure that health consumer needs and expectations are included in the provision of services in communities.
  - VII. **Community Readiness:** HCCA is aware that there are different levels of understanding of health issues in our communities due to different cultural backgrounds, levels of education and different abilities. Therefore, developing strategies, resources and techniques appropriate to match a community's level of readiness is essential for success. This will enable the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and obstacles to the creation of communities that suit the needs and preferences of health consumers.

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<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization (1986), *Ottawa charter for health promotion*, 1<sup>st</sup> International conference on health promotion: The move towards a new public health, Ottawa, accessed February 2022 <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/ottawa-charter-for-health-promotion>

<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization (1997), *Jakarta declaration on leading health promotion into the 21st century*, 4th International conference on health promotion: New players for a new era – leading health promotion into the 21st century, accessed February 2022, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-HPR-HEP-4IHP-BR-97.4>

**5. HCCA contributes to identifying and responding to community health needs** HCCA aims to create greater community development and health promotion by implementing the following strategies:

- I. Advocate for change in health services to ensure responsiveness to the needs of our communities.
- II. Provide a means for health care consumers to participate in local and national policy, planning and service decisions through the provision of training, information, advocacy and consumer participation.
- III. Develop an understanding of consumer experiences, views, and identify priorities and goals by consulting with consumers.
- IV. Foster the optimum provision of health care by encouraging cooperation and coordination among existing services.
- V. Prevent illness, disease and injury through the application of a health promotion framework, informed by the principles of the social determinants of health and social justice.
- VI. Identify and respond to the health issues of health care consumers of the ACT and surrounding region and to inform the public, health services providers, policy makers and funders about these issues.
- VII. Identify the unmet health and wellbeing needs of people in the ACT and surrounding region and raise and promote awareness of these needs to health services, government and general public.
- VIII. Undertake primary research of health consumers' experiences to identify areas for improvement.
- IX. Empower consumers and communities through the use of information and educational resources to act on health matters.
- X. Provide information and advice on consumer health issues, policies and available consumer consultation process.
- XI. Advocate for healthy environments, access to education, housing, services and transport as these factors are essential for good health and wellbeing.
- XII. Reduce health inequities by increasing the health literacy of all groups, particularly disadvantaged groups in our communities. Participation is encouraged and supported through the identification and reduction of barriers.
- XIII. Advocate for consumer centred health services which are designed and delivered based on consumers' preferences, values and needs.
- XIV. Contribute to a culturally responsive health care system for our communities.
- XV. Train consumers to represent consumer perspectives on policy, research and health services.

**E. Relevant policies**

- I. HCCA Health Promotion Framework
- II. HCCA Co-Design Position Statement