

Applying Needs-Based Workforce Planning in Primary Care

Consumer Advisory Group Terms of Reference

Title

The group will be known as the MRFF Primary Care Consumer Advisory Group.

Project funding

This project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care under a Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) grant in the 2023 MRFF Primary Health Care Research round.

Project background, aims and impact

Background

The Australian Government has indicated they have a goal for the health system where coordinated teams of health care professionals work better together to provide quality person-centred care. However, there are barriers that prevent health care professionals from working as a team in a more coordinated way. These include the location, business models, the lack of funding for teamwork, and team characteristics. We need to better understand what consumers want from their health care team to meet their needs, respect their preferences and empower them to manage their health.

Australia, like other countries, is currently experiencing health workforce shortages that are expected to impact available services in the coming decades. There are problems accessing some health care, particularly in rural and remote locations. Getting the health workforce composition right is crucially important, including the ability of the team to substitute tasks between different practitioner types where some team members are not available.

Aims

To support the Australian Government to make best use of health workforce, this project aims to:

- i. Quantify the contribution of the mix of primary health care professionals, including allied health, to health outcomes;
- ii. Identify the most efficient mix of primary health workforce in producing health outcomes;
- iii. Explore policy options for achieving the optimal mix of workforce; and
- iv. Identify funding models, acceptable to consumers and health practitioners that support team-based care.

Impact

The impact of the research will be to inform future policy initiatives that improve the efficiency and retention of the health workforce, enhance person-centred care, and maximise population health outcomes.

Project research team

Our team is a unique mix of healthcare professionals, clinicians, health economists and health workforce researchers, in partnership with two state health departments (ACT Health and Qld Health) and two consumer health organisations (Health Care Consumers Association and Health Consumers Queensland).

The MRFF Primary Care research team includes researchers from six universities:

- The University of Queensland (UQ)
- Australian National University (ANU)
- Lancaster University
- Monash University
- The University of Western Australia (UWA)
- Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

The research team will be partnering with the following organisations:

- Queensland Health
- ACT Health
- Health Consumers Queensland
- Health Care Consumers' Association

The project is led by Professor Lisa Nissen (UQ). Other chief investigators are Associate Professor Jean Spinks (UQ), Associate Professor Tomoko Sugiura (ANU), Dr Elisabeth Huynh (ANU), Associate Professor Son Nghiem (UQ), Dr Jinhua Li (ANU), Dr Christine LaBond (ANU), Dr Isaac Koomson (UQ), Professor Bruce Hollingsworth (Lancaster), Associate Professor Geoff Argus (UQ), Dr Jason Agostino (ANU), Professor Fiona Coyer (UQ), Professor Cylie Williams (Monash), Dr Susie de Jersey (UQ), and Professor Allison McKendrick (UWA). Associate investigators are Emeritus Professor Stephen Birch (UQ), Mr Aaron Grogan (UQ), Mr Mark Cormack (ANU), Dr Sjaan Gomersall (UQ), Professor Vivienne Tippet (QUT). Megan DeIDot (UQ) will be involved with the consumer engagement. Members of the project team in project officer roles are Kim Grant (ANU) and Amanda Griffiths (UQ).

How are consumers involved in the project?

An understanding of consumer preferences for the organisation and accessibility of care they receive is essential. Through consumer engagement, we would like to create a safe and supportive environment to hear about consumers' experiences of accessing team-based primary health care, particularly for Type 2 diabetes and/or cardiovascular disease, or hear from family, friends or carers who have supported others accessing care. We would like to understand the acceptability of care being provided by different mixes of practitioners / teams, alongside other characteristics such as care coordination, location, accessibility, voluntary patient registration, consideration of cultural appropriateness and cost.

This MRFF Primary Care project will have consumer involvement in two governance groups. The role and meeting schedule over the period to 30 June 2027 is shown in the table below.

Group	Role	Frequency of meetings
Consumer Advisory Group	Provides expert advice and consumer insights. Will involve four (4) consumer members.	Twice a year.
Study Advisory Group	Provides expert advice, strategic insight, and supports innovation. Will involve two (2) of the four (4) consumer members from the Consumer Advisory Group.	Three times a year.

In addition to participating in governance groups, we will ask consumers to be involved in:

- **Focus groups** – Up to 48 participants - Focus groups will discuss consumer experiences toward care provision and prioritise positive attributes of care
- **Think aloud interviews** – Up to 15 participants – think aloud interviews will be undertaken to test choices to be included in a consumer survey prior to data collection
- **Survey** – Up to 500 participants – participants will complete the consumer survey on preferences for the provision and characteristics of care.

Consumer Advisory Group (CAG)

Purpose

The purpose of the Consumer Advisory Group is to work together to provide a consumer perspective on current and future activities of the MRFF Primary Care project and work in partnership with researchers and other stakeholders to:

- shape the research which will propose new models of care for Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease;
- be involved in discussions about the research project progress; and
- help the research team inform the community about research findings and outcomes

Members of the Project team will work closely with the Consumer Advisory Group throughout project, combining the expertise and practical knowledge of the project team with the lived experience and support of the Consumer Advisory Group members.

Membership

Convenor

Megan DeIDot will be appointed as convenor for the term to 30 June 2027.

Consumer Advisory Group members

The membership will comprise four (4) consumer representatives, of which two (2) will be from Queensland and two (2) from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Desirable experience, knowledge and skills

Members of the MRFF Primary Care Consumer Advisory Group are consumers, carers or family members who have:

- experienced or supported a person with Type 2 diabetes and/or cardiovascular disease
- experienced care from at least two different types of health practitioners for Type 2 diabetes and/or cardiovascular disease
- some experience sitting on consumer advisory groups or committees (desirable)
- experience in health as a consumer, carer or family member

Term

Members are appointed initially until 30 June 2027, with the possibility of extension for an additional 12 months.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **MRFF Primary Care research group or project team** is responsible for providing:

- Information, training and development opportunities to members relevant to their role on the Consumer Advisory Group
- Resources needed to undertake agreed tasks including remuneration and reimbursement of expenses for consumer members

The **Convenor** will be responsible for:

- ensuring that meetings are kept to time;
- ensuring all agenda items are addressed with members and they are given opportunity to share their lived experience and provide input into discussions and recommendations; and
- leading and facilitating discussion, ensuring that any discussion and agreed outcomes are clearly communicated and agreed on for inclusion in the meeting minutes.

The **MRFF Primary Care Study Advisory Group members** are responsible for:

- Sharing their knowledge, skills and experience to inform the research process
- Attending and actively participating in the MRFF Primary Care Study Advisory Group meetings/workshops and responding to reasonable and agreed out-of-session requests for advice
- Participating, as agreed, in activities which promote the work of the MRFF Primary Care research group or project
- Identifying and reporting an interest that is potential or actual conflict with their involvement in the MRFF Primary Care research project or has the appearance of such a conflict
- Notifying the chair or other research team member, as soon as practical, if any matter arises which may be deemed to affect the progress of the project

Confidentiality

Consumer Advisory Group members shall not directly or indirectly access, disclose or use, for the benefit of themselves or any third party, any confidential information.

Resolving Issues or Conflict

Consumer Advisory Group members have the right to make a complaint in relation to the activities and operation of the group. A complaint may be made in person or in writing. The first point of call should be the Co-Chairs of the group, then the person responsible for the group and then the project Chief Investigator (Professor Lisa Nissen - l.nissen@uq.edu.au), before engaging in a formal grievance procedure.

Ongoing feedback, evaluation and review

The Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by the Consumer Advisory Group members. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

Version	Changes	Date Approved	Next review date
1.0	Original version	Draft – N/A	On appointment of CAG members

Appendix 1

MRFF Primary Care Consumer Advisory Group Operating Procedures

Decision making

The role of the MRFF Primary Care Consumer Advisory Group is advisory, and decision-making is via consensus with divergent views and rationales noted in the minutes.

Reimbursement and remuneration

Consumer Advisory Group members are eligible for remuneration for their attendance at meetings as follows:

Activity	Years	Rate per participant
Consumer Advisory Group meeting / workshop (4 hours and under, inclusive of pre-reading and travel time)	2025 to 2027	\$240
Study Advisory Group meeting / workshop (4 hours and under, inclusive of pre-reading and travel time)		\$240

Meeting attendance

Where a member of the Consumer Group is unable to attend a meeting, they will have the opportunity to provide comments or input into the items for discussion at that meeting.

Meeting venue

All meetings/workshops will be conducted by teleconference/videoconference, unless otherwise indicated.