

29 March 2012

Dear Mr McKeon,

Re: Submission to the NHMRC Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research in Australia

Relevant Review Questions:

- **What are the health and medical research strategic directions and priorities and how might we meet them? (Terms of Reference 5, 12 and 13)**
- **How can we optimise translation of health and medical research into better health and wellbeing? (Terms of Reference 4, 8, 9, 10 and 11)**

I would like address an aspect of health research that requires further attention within Australia.

Patient-centred approaches are essential to improving the safety and quality of health care. Increasingly within Australia and abroad, safety and quality frameworks and standards for health care services include the need to engage and partner with patients, family and carers. The Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) include *Standard 2: Partnering with consumers*, as part of ten *National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards* and reference aspects of patient-centred care throughout the document. The need for a more patient-focussed approach is also acknowledged in the report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission.

Evidence from the United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK) indicate that patient-based care approaches improve access to care, management of chronic conditions, survival, the safety and quality of care, accountability and staff satisfaction whilst decreasing costs to the health care system.

The ACSQHC's Discussion Paper on *Patient-Centred Care* noted, however, that: "Much of the research and literature on patient-centred care originates from the US or Europe....However, not a great deal is known about the implementation of patient-centred care practices within the Australian health system, including the extent to which patient-centred approaches are practiced and the effectiveness of these approaches in the Australian context. In order to advance patient-centred care in Australia, further research is needed in this area."

The ACSQHC recommended that: "Research funding bodies should acknowledge the importance of patient-centred care to the health system and this should be reflected in the distribution of funding."

In addition to research into patient-focused approaches to care delivery, the UK and USA are increasingly researching patient-reported outcome measures (e.g. PROMs research at Oxford University UK).

Another area of development is the increasing engagement of patients in determining priority areas for health research. In the USA, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), established by Congress, is informed by the perspectives, interests and values of patients throughout the research process, from the selection of research questions to the dissemination of research results.

The Clinical Excellence Commission's program *Partnering with Patients* aims to promote this partnership approach to improve the safety and quality of care delivery. Consideration of research into patient-based care approaches in Australia will see our research community join in an area of research that is emerging globally as being of central importance to improving health care.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

Yours sincerely,



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