

SUBMISSION

Sunday, 3 September 2023

AMA submission to Department of Health and Aged Care's Draft National Consumer Engagement Strategy for Health and Wellbeing (NCESHW) Consultation

Submitted Via Survey: <https://consultations.health.gov.au/>

The Department of Health and Aged Care consulted on the draft *National Consumer Engagement Strategy for Health and Wellbeing* (NCESHW) in mid-2023. This Strategy is designed to strengthen partnerships between health policy makers and the community, as set out in one of the immediate priorities for action under the *National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030*.

The purpose of this Strategy is to mobilise a person-centred prevention system by involving communities and consumers in preventive health policy design and implementation in order to enable and support a more engaged population and improved health outcomes for all Australians. The answers below are in response to the Department's survey questions.

7. Purpose. The Purpose of the Strategy and/or the target audience is clear?

- Not at all clear
- Not Clear
- Unsure
- **Clear**
- Very Clear

Q. If not, what would make it clearer?

A. The AMA agrees with the overall purpose of the Strategy but believes that recognising and accommodating for the diverse health needs of Australian consumers must be specified in the purpose of the Strategy.

8. Objectives. Are the objectives for the Strategy clear and appropriate?

- Not at all clear
- Not Clear
- Unsure
- **Clear**
- Very Clear

Q. If not, what is missing?

A. The AMA recommends that the important relationship between this strategy, as one under the wider National Preventative Health Strategy, is identified in the objectives, ensuring consumers are part of all

preventive health developments and implementation going forward. It also recommends that equity of opportunity for all consumers to engage is better highlighted in the objectives, as a priority of the Strategy.

9. Fundamentals. Do the Fundamentals capture what you see as essential for consumer engagement?

- Not at all clear
- Not clear
- Unsure
- **Clear**
- Very clear

Q. If not, what is missing?

A. The AMA recommends that a fundamental principle of accountability is included, to ensure that the strategy meets its intended purpose, and is appropriately implemented within health policy-making. This falls under the good practice guidelines but should be stipulated in the fundamentals. The accountability principle should also ensure evaluation practices are considered and evaluation outcomes addressed in all stages of development and implementation of the Strategy going forward.

10. Good Practice Guidelines

Do you think the Guidelines describe what is needed to help policy-makers work effectively with consumers?

- Not at all
- Very little
- Unsure
- **Well**
- Very Well

Are the Guidelines explained in a way that makes them useful?

- Not at all
- Useful
- Unsure
- **Clear**
- Very clearly explained

Q. Do you have anything to add about the Guidelines?

A. The AMA agrees with the Guidelines, noting that identifying who to engage is an important component of

good consumer relations, and feedback. This must involve a variety of engagement approaches, and understand the risk of engagement-fatigue, when representatives from certain communities are repetitively asked to provide feedback. This risk of fatigue should be minimised, by looking to include a variety of voices across engagement opportunities.

11. If you have been involved in policy-making before as a consumer, what made your engagement in that process a positive experience/ a dissatisfying experience?

NA

12. Health Toolkit

Do you think the Toolkit will be easy to use?

- Not at all
- Very little
- **Unsure**
- Easy
- Very easy

Do you think the Toolkit will help policy-makers better engage consumers in policy-making?

- Not at all
- Very little
- **Unsure**
- Helpful
- Very Helpful

Q. Do you have anything else to add?

A. The explanation and implementation process for this tool-kit needs to be a collaboration between policy- makers and the Department of Health and Aged Care, to ensure that all parties are aware of the fundamentals that underpin the strategy. The AMA suggests that a range of accessible and comprehensive information sessions are offered to those who will use the Toolkit, which will help with competency to engage with consumers more effectively.

13. Are you supportive of the overall purpose, vision and aim of the Strategy?

- Yes
- **Yes, with proposed changes**
- No, with proposed changes

Q. Please specify proposed changes.

A. The AMA agrees with the purpose, vision and aim of the NCESHW, if the Strategy is properly implemented, across all levels of government and preventive health policy making. The accountability and

evaluation practices related to the Strategy are vital to its success and improving preventative health in Australia. This includes understanding that Australians have diverse needs, and varied health literacy capabilities which must be catered for in consultation processes. As mentioned in the AMA's previous answers, the diverse needs of consumers and equity of opportunity to be involved in engagement, must be prioritised in the strategy. This should be specifically mentioned in the purpose, objectives, and fundamentals of the strategy.

14. If you are a consumer and haven't been involved in policy making, would you like to be? Why/Why not?

NA

15. Are there any other engagement approaches that you have found helpful and effective?

NA

16. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

NA

Contact

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