
MEMO

To: Board Members
From: Judith Holmes, Consumer Council Chair
Date: 21 August 2019
Subject: **Consumer Council Report**

Status

This report contains:

- For decision
- Update
- Regular report
- For information

The Consumer Council met in Nelson on Monday 19 July 2019.

The Council has been involved in identifying consumer representatives who would be suitable to serve on the Adverse Events Review panels. One representative has been selected from three interviewed by the Chair for an impending trial review. The Council has now focused attention on procedures to follow with family members at the beginning phases of an Adverse Event review. The Council emphasised the importance of reaching out to family/whanau who are to be included in the Adverse Event Review process. It is felt that who comprises the 'family' or 'whanau' group should be defined by the family or whanau themselves, and that this group could be as large or small as the family chose. The Council also reiterated the need for culturally appropriate support and representation on the Adverse Event Review process, including counselling sessions provided to family members as appropriate. There was also a challenge to the use of a brochure as a first step in providing information to the affected consumers, and whether this is the most appropriate form of communication in distressing situations following an adverse event. Warm compassionate human contact through interaction by staff members in conversation, condolences or whatever is appropriate in the situation, actually acknowledging the situation (without attributing blame on anyone) is seen as a first and appropriate behaviour. However, it is agreed that the Adverse Events Consumer Information Brochure should also be put into the hands of family members as a guide to the possibility of an Adverse Events Review which may follow. The Council has the opportunity again (input was also given some years ago) to give input to the brochure during the redesign process which has just begun. It is essential that the brochure is clear, reassuring and relevant to distressed family who will receive it.

Discussions with the Models of Care Team focused on Virtual Health pilots. These have created huge interest. The Council is keen to see these initiatives progress. Opportunities for Virtual Health hubs to be installed across the region within GP practices, places of employment etc are predicted and favoured by the Council.

An overview of the Self Check-In Kiosk pilot was provided to the Council by the project team. Council members had trialled the kiosk. The Council challenged the team to provide more initial support for patients using the kiosks to increase their use (initial use is very low). Council members who viewed the kiosk in Wairau had some concerns about the visibility of information on the screen, which the team took under advisement. The trade-off of very large font versus privacy from other passers-by was debated. A privacy screen (contingent upon the actual angle of the viewer to the orientation of the screen) is built into the programme and should be activated to allay any concerns of confidentiality. Then a user would be able to read the screen only when directly in front of it and it should be angled away from the corridor where others are walking. The Council is interested in how the use of the kiosks for electronic check-ins can minimise the waiting times which

have now become part of the expected “culture” of patient appointments and a “bone of contention” in the community. A focus on valuing patient time is important if we are to minimise “no shows” and build collaborative patient/medical staff teams. The Council believes that patients who are late for appointments should not be waited for. “Early” patients should be offered the latecomer’s time, if and when appropriate for the attending medical personnel. Punctuality should be rewarded to help alleviate the problems of lateness and frustration with long periods of waiting. New upcoming appointments should be able to be made immediately after a current appointment as required. The old system in some departments of waiting for an appointment letter to come through the mail (via Christchurch and sometimes delivered after the actual appointment time and date) should be modernised and use of appointments made in-person or through email and smartphones is encouraged.

The Consumer Council is sad to farewell Diane Strong. Diane has contributed a strong and uncompromised voice for the consumer since the Council began in 2017. Her contribution will be missed. The Council wishes her well in her new role.

Judith Holmes
Consumer Council Chair

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT THE BOARD RECEIVES THE CONSUMER COUNCIL REPORT.