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Conference Abstract

Empowering consumers to drive system change through the ACI Chronic Care Network

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Abstract

Introduction: Empowering consumers to play an active role in decisions about their care is central to the provision of person-centred care and support for self-management. Less well known is how to effectively and systematically empower and engage consumers to be involved in improving the health system and health services. A major priority for most health services is increasing consumer participation in local planning and decision-making processes. However, the extent to which health services can engage and empower “lay” consumers to be involved is highly variable. The ACI Chronic Care Network is well placed to identify opportunities and strategies for ensuring a more representative sample of consumers are enabled to drive change and improvements in chronic care at a statewide and local level.

Practice and Context: The NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI) is the lead agency in NSW for promoting innovation and engaging clinicians, consumers and managers to design and implement new models of care. In December 2013, the ACI established the Chronic Care Network to improve care across the continuum for people with chronic disease in NSW. The Network is committed to putting the person with chronic disease at the centre of its activities. The focus for the Network is ensuring that consumers are empowered and enabled to drive improvements in chronic care in NSW at a state and local level. The Chronic Care Network is in a unique position to attract consumer participation because it can focus on addressing systemic issues to add value to the existing work undertaken by specialist organisations and Networks.

Course of Action: In establishing a strong consumer focus, the Chronic Care Network will partner with Health Consumers NSW and non-government organisations to tap into existing networks, foster collaboration and support advocacy activities. The Network membership has specifically identified the need to support consumers from vulnerable groups to participate in Network activities and decision-making.

Discussions and Lessons Learnt: Themes identified as priorities by Network members in 2013 included the overall goal of improving health for Australians living with chronic conditions,

achieving a better understanding of the needs of consumers with chronic health care needs and advocating for innovative solutions to improve and integrate their health outcomes.

Keywords

consumers; empowerment; self-management; participation; enablers

PowerPoint presentation

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