

REMUNERATION AND REIMBURSEMENT OF CONSUMERS

Position Statement

Health Consumers Queensland is the peak organisation representing the interests of Queensland health consumers. Since 2008 Health Consumers Queensland has supported a network of consumers, carers and experienced consumer representatives.

Health Consumers Queensland defines “health consumers” as: *people who use, or are potential users, of health services including their family and carers. Consumers may participate as individuals, groups, organizations of consumers, consumer representatives or communities.*

Consumer-centred care and consumer engagement are supported by the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, which acknowledges consumers have the right to have our say and be heard; to be engaged in the decisions about our individual healthcare; and in health policy development and service planning, implementation and evaluation.

In order to gain the maximum benefits of consumer engagement at a strategic level, health services are likely to seek consumers who have:

- knowledge of the health care system e.g. effective models of care, up-to-date evidence, what other services are doing, state and national reforms, etc.;
- exemplar communication skills;
- experience as consumer representatives; and
- connections to broader consumer and community networks, in order to share current users’ experiences, wider than just their own personal experience.

Health services may also seek input from consumers and carers in ways which aren’t as formal or ongoing as high level committees, such as focus groups and reviewing patient information.

Consumer Remuneration and Reimbursement

Health Consumers Queensland recommends that consumers invited to engage with health services should be remunerated for their contribution and reimbursed for expenses.

The Health Consumers Queensland recommended payment rates for health consumers in Queensland have been based on *“Guidelines for Consumer Representatives on Statewide Clinical Network Steering Committees, 2008”*. Health Consumers Queensland has recently reviewed this rate, with reference to consumer remuneration and policies in other states (in particular Health Issues Centre’s position statement *“Paying and Reimbursing Consumers”*) and at the federal level.

Health Consumers Queensland recommends the following payment rates for remuneration of health consumers in Queensland engaging with health services:

Consumer representatives on ongoing, regular, high level committees eg safety and quality, consumer advisory committees/forums.
\$187 per meeting 4 hours and under *
\$374 per meeting 4 hours and over *
(*Covers pre-reading and travel time)
Consumers engaged in less formal ways eg. focus groups, reviewing patient information brochures.
\$40 per hour including preparation time

Reimbursement

Consumers should also be reimbursed for any related to their engagement, eg:

- parking
- travel expenses
- printing costs
- childcare

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