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MEDIA RELEASE

Budget 2022/23 welcomed by healthcare users, but rollout must centre on their needs

The Health Issues Centre – Victoria's peak health consumer organisation – welcomes the Government's focus on health in the 2022/23 Budget.

The Government is right to 'put patients first.' Importantly, delivery of these programs must centre on patient needs and perspectives.

Health Issues Centre CEO, Danny Vadasz, said "Research has shown that consumer-centric health care delivers better outcomes for patients.^{1,2}"

"To be effective, the patient-focused projects announced today must include the voices of consumers as they are rolled out."

Mr Vadasz also commented that "To truly ensure patients and health consumers are put first in our health system, consumers need to be front and center in this Budget and beyond."

This includes when these Budget initiatives are developed and implemented. We stand ready to help government and the sector deliver on the positive patient-focused budget pledges, including:

- COVID catch-up plan
- additional public health capacity to support community engagement and digital capability
- additional funding to the Regional Health Infrastructure Fund
- the establishment of the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing
- digital health initiatives, including Better at Home and a new review into digital connectedness for senior Victorians.

What patients want

Our ongoing engagement with thousands of Victorian healthcare users during the pandemic has shown consumers want to be engaged in their own healthcare. This was reflected in our [Budget submission](#).

The government's new, first-ever Public Engagement Framework (Feb 2022) even encourages public servants to "Consider working with local government, community members, priority communities or advocacy groups on the engagement."

We look forward to working with all sides of politics to further embed consumer-centric care into our healthcare system. Our recent [report on long COVID](#) showed that when you actively engage with consumers they can identify gaps in their care and what they need to improve their lives.

Our ideas on truly putting patients first are [here](#) and our resources to implement true partnerships [here](#).

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WHO WE ARE

[Health Issues Centre](#) is Victoria's peak health consumer organisation. We listen to everyday people and champion improvements to our healthcare system.

We are registered as a charity and have been operating for over 35 years. HIC was formed to provide a voice for consumers from diverse backgrounds.

We use the principles of human-centred design to make sure that health solutions address consumer needs and reflect consumer priorities.

¹ Future of health: shifting Australia's focus from illness treatment to health and wellbeing management. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. Retrieved from <https://www.csiro.au/en/Showcase/futureofhealth> September 2019

² Medicare Benefits Schedule Review Taskforce, 'An MBS for the 21st Century: Recommendations, Learnings and Ideas for the Future - Final Report to the Minister for Health,' December 2020: <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/12/medicare-benefits-schedule-review-taskforce-final-report-an-mbs-for-the-21st-century-recommendations-learnings-and-ideas-for-the-future.pdf>