



28 April 2010

Mr Glenn Ruscoe
Chairman
Physiotherapy Board of Australia
Level 12
120 Spencer Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Ruscoe

Coalition of community representatives on National Boards

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the National Boards' Chairs Group, to seek your consideration of the opportunity to bring community representatives on National Boards together as a way of optimising their representation.

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) is the national peak body representing the interests of Australian healthcare consumers. CHF works to achieve safe, quality, timely healthcare for all Australians, supported by accessible health information and systems.

During the period leading up to the introduction of the National Registration and Accreditation legislation, and in fact ongoing up to the current Senate Inquiry into related matters, CHF has been a strong voice for the importance of continuing to protect the public with a safe, high-quality health system further enhanced by this new legislation.

Our organisation was in favour of the previously proposed Public Interest Assessor. While we welcome the increased community representation on the National Boards, we remain concerned that this will not be a sufficient substitute for the Public Interest Assessor role.

For community representation to be an effective safeguard, we argue that there would be considerable benefit to the Australian community if the consumer representatives on National Boards could be formed into a coalition to discuss matters of common interest to all the Boards and healthcare consumers across the country. This could possibly include some formal training around the consumer and community representation process.

This was raised with the CEO of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, Mr Martin Fletcher, in a teleconference last week. His recommendation was that we bring the idea to the attention of Board chairs by writing to you. He also suggested that time could

probably be allocated during the Aitken Hill meeting in August for the first formal gathering of all the community members, given that most, if not all, would be present. Future meetings and activities would depend on the support of the concept by representatives, but would also require endorsement of the Chairs of the National Boards, given that Boards would probably need to contribute to the funding of further meetings.

We would appreciate feedback from you and your colleagues to allow us to progress this proposal and develop an agenda for the first meeting.

Yours sincerely

Carol Bennett
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

cc Martin Fletcher – CEO AHPRA
Tim Benson – Member CHF Governing Committee