

Ref: S1006

20 October 2010

Ms Naomi Bleaser  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Bleaser

**National Health and Hospitals Network Bill 2010 - reintroduced into the House of Representatives on 29 September 2010**

Thank you for your correspondence of 5 October 2010 outlining the re-referral of the *National Health and Hospitals Network Bill 2010* to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee.

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.

CHF provided a submission to the Committee on this Bill in August 2010. We understand from your letter that the Committee will be considering past submissions as part of the current inquiry, but would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that our position on this Bill remains unchanged.

CHF welcomes the introduction of this legislation, but raises concerns about some aspects of the Bill. Our submission called for specific reference to health consumer engagement in the functions of the Commission and identification of health consumers as a target group for consultation.

Our submission also called for greater clarity around the role of the Commission in relation to allied health professionals as well as specific reference in the legislation to 'informed' consent in relation to confidentiality.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee in order to expand on the issues raised in our submission.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss any aspects of our submission further.

Yours sincerely

**Carol Bennett**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**