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20 June 2017

Dr Grant Davies
Director of Projects
Safer Care Victoria
50 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Dr Davies

Carers Victoria welcomes the development of the Draft Victorian Framework for Clinical Networks. We support the Framework's guidance to communities of practice in identifying and responding to evidence-practice gaps and opportunities to introduce best practice within clinical health services.

Carers Victoria believes this Framework also creates an environment for the establishment of new clinical networks. The potential to establish a network in clinical mental health is relevant to many of our carer members and partner organisations. Carers Victoria would welcome future opportunities for consultation and involvement in the development and implementation of such a network.

Under '2.5 Consumer Engagement' in this Framework we note carer and consumer needs are included in Clinical Network activities via guidance provided by the "Patient Experience and Partnerships Branch" of Safer Care Victoria. Carers Victoria would like some clarification on the interface between this Branch and the Department of Health and Human Services. We note page 16 of the Framework states the Department will work 'to transition quality and safety activities which were previously the responsibility of its programs'.

Carers Victoria would like more detail on the interface between Patient Experience and Partnerships Branch and the Department's range of health care frameworks and strategic plans. In particular, we seek more detail on the interface between the Branch and related taskforces, reference groups and sector representative roles initiated by the Department, such as those established for the implementation of Victoria's end of life and palliative care framework and 10-year mental health plan.

While we note the word consumer is used in the draft Framework with the intent to describe 'patients, clients, residents, families, carers and communities' Carers Victoria recommends the use of more specific language. It is important to recognise the 'lived experience' of carers who are health consumers in their own right and of health consumers who also have a caring role.

Carers Victoria recommends using language which recognises care relationships in line with the Victorian Carers Recognition Act (2012) to assist clinical practitioners recognise care relationships which do not necessarily conform to a 'carer' and 'consumer' dichotomy. Carers Victoria also recommends the Framework is amended to ensure care relationship concerns and groups representing carers are specifically included in networks and identified specifically as 'carer representatives' in addition to 'consumer representatives'.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Walker".

Scott Walker
Interim CEO