

26 May 2023

Measuring What Matters
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To whom it may concern,

RE: Measuring What Matters

We welcome the opportunity to provide a submission to the Treasury's second consultation on the Measuring What Matters Statement.

Background

For more than 70 years, AHHA has been the national voice for public healthcare, maintaining its vision for an effective, innovative, and sustainable health system where all Australians have equitable access to health care of the highest standard when and where they need it.

As a national peak body, we are uniquely placed, in that we do not represent any one part of the health system. Rather, our membership spans the system in its entirety, including – public and not-for-profit hospitals, Primary Health Networks, community, and primary healthcare services. Our research arm, the Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research connects universities with a strength in health systems and services research, ensuring our work is underpinned by the evidence.

Through these connections, we provide a national voice for universal high-quality health care. It is a voice that respects the expertise and views of each component of the system, while recognising that siloed views will not achieve a system that Australians deserve.

Response

Our first submission identified how measuring what matters to Australian people and communities aligns with the framework of value-based health care, as well as the value in learning from First Nations peoples in order to reflect a holistic conceptualisation of health. Within that context, and in response to the draft Measuring What Matters Statement released, this subsequent submission recommends two further considerations.

1. A holistic model of health.

The draft Statement is introduced by a note that 'wellbeing is holistic' and that 'the themes need to be viewed as interconnected'. However, physical and mental health are inextricably linked. Their separation in the Statement may exacerbate the health inequalities and barriers that have resulted from a system that has not achieved integration of physical, mental and social dimensions within our systems.

Additionally, the spiritual dimension of health is absent. Spirituality is an evolving and diversifying concept in Australia. While long recognised as a critical factor for the wellbeing of First Nations peoples and religious Australians, at its core is a central role in creating meaning,

purpose and connectedness.ⁱ To adequately reflect this interconnectedness, the health of Australians must be conceptualised holistically within the Measuring What Matters Statement.

2. Ensuring inclusivity

The language used in the 'healthy' theme and corresponding descriptions are framed in a way that may exclude certain members of society. While promoting good physical and mental health are crucial for societal progress, it is important that the conceptualisation of 'healthy' is inclusive of the entirety of society. Narrowly defining health to physical and mental may exclude sections of society, such as people with a disability, older people, people with chronic condition or a life-limiting illness. Equity, access, and affordability of care is therefore important to capture, in addition to cultural and spiritual health, as outlined above.

Furthermore, we question the singling out of gender equality in the 'inclusive' theme whilst the 'opportunities at work and in the community' for other discriminated against populations are not explicitly mentioned, such as people with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse peoples and First Nation peoples. To be inclusive, it is important to measure and report on the outcomes for all priority populations.

Australia is only as good as the health of all its people, and we welcome your leadership in ensuring what matters to society is effectively captured.

Yours sincerely,



Kylie Woolcock
Chief Executive

ⁱ Spiritual Health Association. (2023). National Model for Spiritual Care in Health. <https://www.spiritualhealth.org.au/Co-Design%20Project/SHA-National-Model-for-Spiritual-Care-in-Health-2023.pdf>