Crohn's & Colitis Australia

Information package

Crohn's & Colitis Australia

Chronic Inflammatory Condition (CIC) Nurses in Regional Australia

A proposal for Consideration as an Election Commitment

April 2022

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Contact Us here
or call 03 9815 1266

Foreword

Crohn's & Colitis Australia has been working in partnership with eight other organisations to seek the support of government for ***A Proposal to Fund Nurses in Regional Centres to Support People Living with Chronic Inflammatory Conditions*** including:

- Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA),
  Rheumatology Health Professionals Special Interest Group Association (RHPSIG),
  and ARA Regional Rheumatology Committee
- Gastroenterological Society of Australia (GESA)
- Australasian College of Dermatologists
- Australian College of Nursing
- Gastroenterological Nurses College of Australia (GENCA)
  and IBD Nurses Association (IBDNA)
- Arthritis Australia
- Psoriasis Australia

Our proposal was not taken up by the federal government in the latest budget and we are seeking election commitments from all parties and candidates in the upcoming federal election.

We have developed this information pack because we need your help to secure support for this proposal which we expect will greatly improve the quality of life for people living in regional and rural locations.

The pack contains:

- A Q&A Sheet
- Guidance on how to write or call a politician or candidate
- A copy of the full proposal

How can you help?

- Spread the word through your networks by
  - Telling them where they can download the information pack:
    https://crohnsandcolitis.org.au/advocacy/election-commitment/
  - Discuss the advocacy you can undertake in your local communities
  - Like and Share media posts about the proposal
- Contact politicians and candidates to tell them why this proposal should be supported

If you wish to discuss how you can help please contact us on 03 9815 1266 or contact us.

Many thanks for your assistance

Leanne Raven
CEO
Crohn's & Colitis Australia

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Q&A

1. Who is this helping?

Approximately 3.6 million Australians suffer from chronic inflammatory conditions. For example, rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile arthritis, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, ankylosing spondylitis, and psoriasis.

Chronic inflammation causes a range of debilitating symptoms and multimorbidities.
These include anaemia, profound fatigue, a range of physical disabilities, restriction of activities due to gut dysfunction, mental health conditions, and in some conditions, an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and premature mortality.

The young are affected disproportionately and in the prime of their lives.
These conditions have their maximum impact at a time when people are establishing themselves in the world. These disabling symptoms often start in the teens and twenties, and impair the ability of those affected to study, learn a trade, form relationships...
As a result, the economic consequences go far beyond simple measures like costs of medications, hospitalisation and productivity losses, which in themselves are significant.

Health care in regional and rural Australia is sub-optimal.
Demonstrated in many quality-of-care audits and patient experience studies.

2. Why is this the right time?

"It's not the right time: it's already too late!"
Medications called the "the biologicals" truly transform the lives of patients. Prompt diagnosis of these inflammatory conditions and early treatment with these agents prevent functional disability, disease progression, social and mental health impacts and healthcare costs. The initiation of these drugs is restricted to specialists, and ongoing supply requires rigorous assessments including the completion of patient diaries and the monitoring of blood test results. Patients need ongoing support in many domains. Some examples: these agents are self-injected, so the techniques need to be taught; they have immune suppressive actions and patients are at risk of developing serious infections. In both these circumstances, immediate advice is often required.

These medications have been available for over a decade yet eligible rural and regional patients have limited access to these drugs because of the lack of multidisciplinary support in the primary health sector. Ideally, we would prefer patients to have ready access to all three specialist medical services (Rheumatology, Gastroenterology and Dermatology), but in their absence an integrated hub-and-spoke model of care with specialised nurses integrated into existing health care networks will improve the quality of care that is lacking in these communities.

3. Why is this the right support?

The benefits of specialist nurses as members of multidisciplinary teams are wellestablished, documented through research and included in the national workforcemodels. The Australian College of Nursing Position Statement, ***Nursing leadership in managing multimorbidity and COVID-19***, recommends that the government should fund the development and rollout of innovative nurse-led approaches to managing multimorbidity.

That this is the right support is evidenced by the endorsement of:
The relevant consumer groups:
(Arthritis Australia; Crohn's & Colitis Australia, Psoriasis Australia)
The relevant peak nursing colleges and associations:
(Australian College of Nursing, Gastroenterological Nurses College of Australia and IBD Nurses Association); and
The relevant peak medical colleges and associations:
(Australian Rheumatology Association; Gastroenterological Society of Australia; and Australasian College of Dermatologists).

Email or call a politician or candidate

Contacting local members and senators, leaders, political parties, and candidates, is really effective. Political offices always record the number of calls and emails they receive on an issue, and it affects their own advocacy within their party and in the community.

Calling or emailing your local member and other candidates is a good start. You can also search for your local member and senators on the Australian Parliament House website. Below is a list of other members and senators, who may be interested in your views on this proposal which can be downloaded here.

Government, Opposition, Greens, minor parties and independent leaders		
The Hon Scott Morrison MP	Prime Minister	02 6277 7700 Scott.Morrison.MP@aph.gov.au
The Hon David Gillespie MP	Minister for Regional Health	02 6277 7495 David.Gilespie.MP@aph.gov.au
Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC	Minister for Government Services	08 9477 5411 Senator.reynolds@aph.gov.au
The Hon Luke Howarth MP	Assistant Minister for Youth and Employment Services	02 6277 4018 Luke.Howarth.MP@aph.gov.au
Senator the Hon Anne Ruston	Manager of Government Business in the Senate	02 6277 7560 Senator.Ruston@aph.gov.au
The Hon Anthony Albanese MP	Leader of the Opposition	02 6277 4022 A.Albanese.MP@aph.gov.au
The Hon Mark Butler MP	Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing	02 6277 4089 Mark.Butler.MP@aph.gov.au
The Hon Bill Shorten MP	Shadow Minister for Government Services	02 6277 4167 Bill.Shorten.MP@aph.gov.au
The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP	Shadow Minister for Youth	02 6277 2293 Amanda.Rishworth.MP@aph.gov.au
Ms Ged Kearney MP	Shadow Assistant Minister for Health and Ageing	02 6277 4152 ged.kearney.mp@aph.gov.au
Mr Adam Bandt MP	Leader of the Australian Greens	02 6277 4775 Adam.Bandt.MP@aph.gov.au
Senator Jordon Steele-John	Australian Greens Health Spokesperson	08 6245 3310 Senator.steele-john@aph.gov.au
Senator Stirling Griff	Centre Alliance	08 8272 7575 Senator.griff@aph.gov.au
Senator Jacqui Lambie	Jacqui Lambie Network	03 6431 3112 Senator.lambie@aph.gov.au
Senator Rex Patrick	Independent	08 8232 1144 Senator.patrick@aph.gov.au