

Media Release

28 April 2021



Private Healthcare Australia
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Atlas to improve Australian healthcare delivery

Private Healthcare Australia CEO Dr Rachel David said the *Fourth Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation* would make a significant contribution to improving healthcare delivery in Australia.

“Australia’s healthcare system is something that all Australians can be proud of, our healthcare professionals and our hospitals are among the best in the world. However, the impact of COVID-19 coupled with increasing expectations of our ageing population have highlighted the need to focus resources where they are most efficient and effective,” said Dr David.

“The delivery of high quality, evidence-based treatment options that improve health outcomes for consumers, has never been more important. The Atlas, produced by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare contributes to this goal by mapping healthcare use across Australia and identifying unwarranted variation in healthcare treatments.

“The use of health interventions with negligible benefit to patients causes harm to individuals and contributes unnecessarily to healthcare inflation. As the costs of healthcare continue to rise and affordability becomes an increasingly major concern for Australian consumers, providing accurate, evidence-based information to consumers and healthcare professionals is critical to ensuring the sustainability of our world class healthcare system.

“Further, its contribution to improving the safety of healthcare interventions for Australians cannot be underestimated. For example, the Atlas has identified an unnecessary risk to many Australian babies as a result of the early scheduling of births by caesarean section, without medical reason.”

The Atlas contributes to consumer education and increases community awareness of potentially harmful and unnecessary interventions across six clinical areas: early planned births; potentially preventable hospitalisations for chronic disease and infection; ear, nose and throat surgery in children and young people; lumbar spinal surgery; gastrointestinal investigations; and medicines use in older people.

Health funds will continue to work with the Commission, hospitals, health professionals and our community to ensure the issues raised in the Atlas are addressed.

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Private Healthcare Australia is the peak representative body for Australia’s private health insurance industry. PHA represents 23 Australian health funds with a combined membership of over 13 million Australians, or 97% of the sector on membership.

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