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# MEMO

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**To:** Board Members  
**From:** Judith Holmes, Consumer Council Chair  
**Date:** 21 June 2017  
**Subject:** **Consumer Council Report**

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## *Status*

This report contains:

For decision

Update

✓ Regular report

✓ For information

The Consumer Council held their fourth meeting in Nelson on Monday 19 June.

Members of the Council are very eager to develop their knowledge of the health system in Nelson Marlborough. As a result of some discussion of cases that came to their attention at the last meeting, the Council had some questions about violence screening at the Emergency Department and also the referral and triage system used to access clinical specialists. Consequently, we had two Question and Answer sessions at the June meeting to further member understanding of several issues that had arisen. The first was with a representative from the Violence Intervention Programme. They provided information on how the family violence intervention policies were developed and discussed some of the detail and rationale behind these policies. The Council is interested in seeing more detail on staff training delivered under the Violence Intervention Programme.

The second session was with the Service Manager Surgical Services. They provided information on how patients are referred for specialist care. The Council discussed the process at length, and were particularly interested to understand areas where access to care and equity of care may be an issue. The Council will continue discussions at their next meeting to decide on areas for concern that they will follow up. In the meantime, the Council would like to see some encouragement (possibly in the Healthline article) for members of the public seeking surgery to consider, and prepare for the possibility of their surgery taking place at either of our two sites (Wairau and Nelson). Explanation of the need to fill surgical appointments where we have specialist care available could aid in the readiness of patients to travel, and hopefully result in a higher number of patients being ready and able to accept places as they become available. It appears that, when given notice that an opportunity for surgery has arisen at "the other campus", many patients have not prepared for the possibility and turn down the opportunity. We need to maximise the specialist care that we have available. We believe that given a good explanation of our set up and advance warning, many patients would be happy to adapt their expectation of where surgery will take place.

The Council discussed the interventions recommended for improving patient understanding of medical side effects and condition management following discharge from hospital (provided in the report 'Raising the Bar on the Patient Experience'). The Council concluded that patients need to be given information that is:

- Understandable – highlight the important information, use different methods (verbal, paper, online, audio visual etc), use simple and clear language
- Understood – we need to check patients understand what we have told them
- Given to the right people – we need to make sure family and whanau who will be involved in patient care are included in the discharge process

The Consumer Council intend to invite the Executive Leadership Team to join them at the start of the next meeting.

Judith Holmes  
**Consumer Council Chair**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT THE BOARD RECEIVES THE CONSUMER COUNCIL REPORT.**