

Paying and reimbursing consumers

Position statement

Health Issues Centre recommends that health services and health-related organisations inviting consumers to contribute to the planning of services and programs should offer them a sitting fee for their time. It is also an expectation that the consumers be fully reimbursed for all out-of-pocket expenses associated with their participation.

In addition, we encourage organisations to consider ways of enhancing the skills, knowledge and capacity of their consumers. These might include sponsorships for attending conferences or access to relevant information or training.

In order to implement a sound process for administering payment to consumers, organisations will need to develop and document:

- an overarching policy on consumer participation
- an identified budget for making payments to consumers
- a position statement on payments to consumers
- a clear process for administering payments to consumers
- a schedule of payments for consumers undertaking various roles within the organisation

Payment schedule

We recommend the following as a minimum. **All rates are per hour.** There are a few special considerations:

- If the consumer is involved in work where other members are being paid a sitting fee, it would be expected that they would receive the same rate.
- Organisations may wish to set a scaled daily rate for consumers who are participating in activities requiring more than a few hours per day.
- It may be appropriate to consider special needs on a case-by-case basis when applying a payment schedule.
- If significant preparation time is required, we recommend that organisations pay an additional amount to the sitting fee.

Consumer role	Government	Non-government organisation	Small community-based organisation
Membership of an ongoing committee (e.g. CAC, Q&S)	\$50	\$50	\$30
Delivering a presentation or training session to health service staff, health professionals or other health consumers	\$100	\$100	\$50
Delivering a presentation at a conference or forum	\$125	\$125	\$75
Participating in a state-wide or regional advisory committee	\$75	\$75	-
Reviewing documents (including consumer health information)	\$40	\$40	\$25
Participating as a panel member at a conference	\$75	\$75	\$40

Reimbursement

In addition to payment, Health Issues Centre recommends organisations reimburse all of the following out-of-pocket expenses that are associated with the participation of consumers:

- parking
- travel expenses
- printing costs

Participation in consultations

As an acknowledgment of their time and the value of their contribution, we recommend offering some or all of the following for consultations:

- reimbursement for travel expenses and parking
- light refreshments
- gift voucher

Good practice

- Payment or reimbursement arrangements need to be in place and explained to consumers prior to the beginning of their participation. This information needs to include the name and contact details of the staff member allocated to this task.
- Some consumers may prefer not to be paid or reimbursed; instead they may request a donation be made to a charity of their choice.
- It may be important for some consumers to receive their reimbursement for travel expenses prior to attending the meeting or activity, such as a cab-charge. It is best to discuss this with them in advance.
- Payment and reimbursement needs to be made promptly. They should not have to follow up with the organisation on their outstanding reimbursement and payment.