

Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee

Communiqué – February 2021

Preamble

Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee

The Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee (Committee) was established to provide advice to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services on sexual and reproductive health-related matters in the context of the *Queensland Sexual Health Strategy 2016–2021* (Strategy) and associated action plans. The Committee is scheduled to meet quarterly.

Sexual Health Research Fund and Research Sub-Committee

The Sexual Health Research Fund (SHRF) was established to provide seed funding for translational research activities to improve the delivery of sexual health services in Queensland and support implementation of the Strategy. The Research Sub-Committee (RSC) is a subset of the Committee and is convened to set research priorities and assess and recommend research applications.

This communiqué provides an overview of major items discussed at the twelfth Committee meeting held on 11 February 2021.

Committee meeting overview

The Committee received a presentation on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Division, Queensland Health, from Mr Kiel Weigel and Ms Vanda Simpson, which provided a strategic overview of the Division and its priorities.

An update was received from Ms Kath McFarlane and Dr Karen Murphy, Queensland Health, on the implementation progress of the *North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexually Transmissible Infections Action Plan 2016–2021*. A reduction in some testing for infectious syphilis in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities was noted, with contributing factors considered to be related to COVID-19 impacts. An increase in notifications in some areas, particularly in a younger population, was also noted.

The Committee discussed its annual stakeholder engagement forum planned for the latter half of 2021 and agreed to focus on North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sexual health, with the forum venue to be located in Townsville. It was agreed that the forum should be relevant to both the community and service providers, with infectious syphilis to be included as a focal point. It was further agreed that there was a need for a smaller, focussed event to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sexual health issues in Mt Isa in the lead-up to the larger event.

The Committee received a presentation on Prisoner Health and Wellbeing which included findings of the *Offender Health Services Review Final Report* and overview of the *Prisoner Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020–2025*, noting the linkages to sexual and reproductive health, and treatment and protection measures.

Transgender and gender diverse issues were discussed by the Committee, with the Committee noting the Australian context of medical treatment for gender dysphoria in adolescents and issues around potential misgendering in health service environments.

The *Notifications of Syphilis in Queensland 2019 Report* was discussed by the Committee and the Committee agreed that key findings in the report would be considered for the 2021 annual stakeholder engagement forum.

More information on the Queensland Sexual Health Strategy and Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee can be found at [Queensland Health Sexual Health Strategy](#) or contact us via email: SexualHealthStrategy@health.qld.gov.au