

Communiqué

November 2024

Preamble

Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee

The Sexual Health Ministerial Advisory Committee (Committee) was established in 2017 by former Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, Hon Cameron Dick MP, following the release of the whole of government *Queensland Sexual Health Strategy 2016 – 2021*. In 2022, the Strategy was replaced by the *Queensland Sexual Health Framework (Framework)*, supported by a series of Action Plans for Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections (BBV/STI).

The Committee aims to facilitate a strategic approach around sexual and reproductive health between government agencies, the non-government sector, researchers, and service providers. The Committee provides advice based on current available evidence. To remain current with sector issues and emerging areas of potential advice, the Committee receives presentations and briefings on a range of matters. Core to their remit, the Committee is not a lobbyist body or an advocacy group.

The Committee is appointed for its third term, until March 2025, under the current Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, the Hon Timothy Nicholls MP.

Sexual Health Research Fund and Research Sub-Committee

The Research Subcommittee (Subcommittee) is a group of Committee members who oversee the strategic direction of the Sexual Health Research Fund (SHRF). The SHRF was established to provide seed funding for translational research activities to improve the delivery of sexual health services in Queensland and to support the implementation of the Framework. The Subcommittee sets research priorities and reviews and makes recommendations regarding applications for SHRF grants to Queensland Health.

The Committee is scheduled to meet quarterly, and Communiqués are generated to provide an overview of major items discussed at each meeting. This Communiqué provides an overview of the Committee meeting held on 18 November 2024 and includes an update on the SHRF.

Committee meeting overview

Briefings at the November Committee meeting focussed on Queensland Health initiatives supporting the state's sexual health workforce to better achieve optimal sexual and reproductive health outcomes for all Queenslanders.

The Committee were briefed on implementation of the [Queensland Syphilis Action Plan \(QSAP\)](#), launched in February 2024. More than 76% of short-term actions have been completed or are in progress.



QSAP implementation achievements to date include:

- New permanent sexual health workforce positions across Queensland, provided through the [Health Workforce Strategy for Queensland to 2032 – Investment Plan](#), including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker/Practitioner, Nursing, Midwifery, Public Health, Epidemiology, and Medical Officer positions.
- The national [True or Gammon](#) campaign features Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers.
- Queensland Health's [Patient Safety Health Service Directive](#) was updated in October 2024 with the [Protocol for reporting congenital syphilis](#).

The Committee thanked the Communicable Diseases Branch for their leadership in driving development and supporting implementation of the QSAP. More information on the QSAP can be found at [Queensland Sexual Health Framework](#) or via email: syphilisationplan@health.qld.gov.au.

Queensland Health's Public Health Intelligence Branch provided a demonstration of new dashboard tools and surveillance reporting developed to deliver timely and responsive epidemiology to Queensland's sexual health sector. Queensland Health publishes [weekly surveillance reports for mpox cases](#) which includes epidemiological information as well as links to mpox vaccine advice, national public health guidelines and mpox fact sheets for the public.

Queensland Health's HIV Public Health Team (Communicable Diseases Branch) presented the outcomes of a desktop audit undertaken to follow up people living with HIV who may not be engaged in care. A key project outcome highlighted the limited mainstream community education available 10–15 years ago. The national theme for [World AIDS Day 2024 – It starts with me](#) – encouraged personal empowerment by ensuring people have contemporary knowledge about HIV. Key messages are:

- HIV infection can be prevented with simple medication.
- Most people on HIV treatment cannot pass on HIV: *Undetectable = Untransmissible*.
- You can get help to live well with HIV: get started by talking to [Queensland Positive People](#).

Free HIV treatment is available to all people living with HIV in Queensland: more information is available through Queensland Health at [HIV | Health and wellbeing](#).

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for February 2025.

Research Subcommittee update

Round 6 of the SHRF will be held during the 2025–26 financial year.

More information on the SHRF, including a list of funded projects and information on future SHRF rounds, can be found at [Queensland Sexual Health Research Fund](#).

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