

Communiqué

June 2023

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, 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 receive 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 has been reappointed for a third term until March 2025 under the current Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women, the Hon Shannon Fentiman MP.

Sexual Health Research Fund and Research Sub-Committee

The Research Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee) is a group of Committee members who oversee the Sexual Health Research Fund (SHRF). The Fund was established to provide seed funding for translational research activities to improve the delivery of sexual health services in Queensland and to support implementation of the Framework. The Sub-Committee set research priorities and assess and approve SHRF applications.

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 29 June 2023 and includes an update on the SHRF.

Committee meeting overview

The June Committee meeting included a Sexual and Reproductive Health Workforce Roundtable discussion exploring current issues impacting Queensland's sexual and reproductive health workforce, and strategies supporting a sustainable and responsive workforce into the future. The Committee welcomed participation from the broad sexual and reproductive health sector including Queensland Health representatives, specialist sexual health clinicians, General Practitioners, nursing and midwifery, First Nations clinicians and health workers, and representation from the strategic workforce policy area within the Department.



The need for a dedicated sexual and reproductive health workforce was affirmed in providing sensitive, non-judgemental, and specialist health services, and was identified as of particular importance for priority populations. It was noted that specialist health services are experiencing high and increasing demand for services.

Roundtable participants agreed on the general lack of recognition of sexual health as a healthcare speciality across disciplines. The group noted that models of care require consideration to meet the community's need for free, accessible, affordable, and stigma free health services.

The lack of clear and accessible training, education, and authorisation pathways was identified as a key barrier to workforce sustainability for doctors, nurses, and Aboriginal Health Workers and Health Practitioners.

Local cross-sector referral pathways and collaborative networks were highlighted as a key initiative for specialist sexual health clinicians and GPs to develop flexible models of care for communities, and to enhance sharing of expertise and skill development across disciplines.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for August 2023.

Research Sub-Committee update

As outlined in the March 2023 Communiqué, the Committee have paused Round 5 of the SHRF to focus on strategic planning to support future SHRF rounds.

More information on the SHRF, including a list of funded projects, 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.