

Communiqué

November 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* (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, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women, the Hon Shannon Fentiman 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 assesses and approves 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 23 November 2023 and includes an update on the SHRF.

Committee meeting overview

The November Committee meeting focussed on planning for the Committee's 2024 and future priorities.

The Committee identified potential priority areas relevant to the Minister's portfolio and in support of the Framework such as:

- equitable access to termination of pregnancy services,
- barriers to general and/or specialist healthcare for gender diverse people,
- implementation of the [Crisis Care Process Ministerial Direction](#),



- improved visibility of data on BBV/STI testing rates, sexual health service demand, and activity and performance measures,
- continued support for the elimination of congenital syphilis through addressing infectious syphilis in the community,
- support for sexual and reproductive health workforces, such as clinicians and health workers being able to work to their full scope of practice to best meet the increasing and varied demands of Queensland communities, and
- opportunities to extend cross-government collaboration to address social determinants of health and support optimal sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing for all Queenslanders.

The Committee particularly reflected on the standing challenges and complexities in data sharing between health sectors and stakeholders and the importance of this data in reflecting the service delivery, achievements and priorities of Queensland's sexual health workforce. The Committee supports improved data collection and reporting for priority populations including culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and older people / ageing populations.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for February 2024.

Research Subcommittee update

At their November meeting, the Committee endorsed the Subcommittee's planning recommendations for Round 5 of the SHRF. Round 5 opened on the 11 December 2023 and will close on the 8 March 2024.

Research priorities will not be specified for Round 5. SHRF applications have always needed and must continue to align with the broad range of priorities articulated in the Framework. Applications are encouraged to explore improvements for Queenslanders' sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing which can be directly translated into practice.

To support the translation of project findings, the SHRF requires applications to demonstrate meaningful partnerships with health and/or social services providers. Applications are encouraged from those who have not received funding in previous rounds.

More information on the SHRF, including a list of previously 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.