

HIV Services Advisory Group

First year in review

In its first 12 months of operation, the HIV Services Advisory Group (HSAG) made significant progress in advancing the care of Victorians living with HIV.

Chaired by Alfred Health's Chief Executive, Andrew Way, HSAG comprises community members and their advocacy groups, clinical, academic and government representatives.

The committee was established in October 2014 to help Alfred Health plan for future services as well as identify community needs and future trends in HIV care.

Areas of focus for 2014-15 were:

- *Reviewing action plans to ensure equitable state-wide access to NPEP*
Non-Occupational Post Exposure Prophylaxis, commonly known as PEP, is a drug required within 72 hours of a potential exposure to HIV to help prevent infection. There are now 10 regional hospital emergency departments where NPEP can be obtained, as well as 14 GP clinics and sexual health services across rural and regional health services. PEP is now accessible in at least two sites in each rural region of Victoria.
- *Supporting the set-up of two new Medicare billing clinics at the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre and The Alfred*
This initiative supports individuals who purchase their HIV prevention drug PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) and includes the offer of regular STI testing.
- *Ongoing discussions about services provided by Alfred Health*
This included discussions about services at Fairfield House, Melbourne Sexual Health Centre and Horizon Place. There is a commitment from Alfred Health to consult users and the community about future services.
- *Exploring fears of stigma within hospital*
Some HIV positive people admitted to non-infectious diseases wards are fearful of disclosing their HIV status. Alfred Health's *Patients Come First* strategy will address a long-term approach to encourage respect for people from all cultures, genders, religions as well as the provision of a safe place for all patients.
- *Considering potential lobbying for the PBS listing of drugs suitable for PrEP*
This included a clinical trial that assesses the impact on the Victorian population of widespread PrEP use on rates of new diagnoses.



Prof Andrew Way
CEO Alfred Health
Chair Alfred HIV Services Advisory Group
December 2015

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What is the HIV Services Advisory Group?

Alfred Health's HIV Services Advisory Group (HSAG) was established in October 2014 to help Alfred Health plan for future services and identify community needs and future trends in HIV care.

It comprises community members and advocacy groups as well as clinical, academic and government representatives. The group meets every two months.

HSAG Membership

Community and Advocacy Group Members

- Mr Philip Elphinstone
- Mr David Menadue
- Mr Max Niggl
- Mr Simon Ruth
- Mr Bernie Slagtman
- Ms Michelle Wesley

Alfred Health representatives

- Prof Christopher (Kit) Fairley – Director, Melbourne Sexual Health Centre / Professor of Public Health, Central Clinical School, Monash University
- Prof Jenny Hoy – Director of HIV Medicine, Alfred Health
- Dr Margaret Hellard – Burnet Institute
- Mr Brendon Peters – Nurse Unit Manager Fairfield House, Alfred Health
- Prof Andrew Way (Chair) – Chief Executive, Alfred Health
- Ms Suzanne Corcoran – Executive Officer

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is also represented at this meeting.



HSAG member Bernie Slagtman, a long-term survivor of HIV, says

“We're all interested in how to best spend the public dollar and provide the best possible service. It is a great step that the HIV community is involved in these discussions.”