

2018 Year in Review

Focus areas for 2017-18

The HIV Services Advisory Group (HSAG) has continued to advocate for the care of Victorians living with HIV, in its fourth year of operation.

PrEP

As the PrEPX trial came to an end in 2018, HSAG welcomed the news of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) being added to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). The Government's decision to add PrEP to the PBS has made the drug affordable and widely accessible across Victoria. The success of the trial was a big step towards driving down HIV transmission rates in Victoria.

Melbourne Sexual Health Centre (MSHC) found that the number of Australian-born men who have sex with men who were diagnosed with HIV at the centre in 2017 was the lowest in a decade.

HSAG welcomed planned studies that will explore further ways to optimise HIV prevention in Victoria.

HIV Assist

A new model of care - HIV Assist - successfully launched in 2018 to replace the services provided through Horizon Place. The service supports people living with HIV with complex care needs. HSAG was involved in the consultation process as the model of care was developed.



State's first HIV Nurse Practitioner

Victoria's first HIV Nurse Practitioner - Dani Collins from Alfred Health - was endorsed in May 2018. As a nurse practitioner, Dani is able to work autonomously within both HIV prevention and treatment, while also working collaboratively with Infectious Diseases physicians. This new role has enabled greater access to HIV screening and prevention initiatives (such as PrEP) in outreach clinics in Bendigo, Footscray and Frankston. She is also able to provide a rapid response to new HIV diagnosis referrals through the GP Connect program, Red Cross Blood Bank and Nucleus Network.

Dani runs The Alfred's InReach program, which involves reviewing patients living with HIV and AIDS admitted under other units. She ensures appropriate ART prescribing and provides up-to-date comorbidity screening, immunisations and linkages to care.

Peer Navigator Program

Living Positive Victoria commenced a Peer Navigator Pilot Project in 2018, with initial funding from a ViiV Positive Action Community Grant and a larger grant over three years from the Victorian Government. The project sees HIV-positive peer workers support people with HIV in high case load Melbourne clinics, including MSHC. In September, peer support manager Sara Graham and Aash, one of the peer navigators, attended HSAG to talk about the project and experiences in the role. HSAG looks forward to the findings from the project and the potential for integrating the peer model into HIV services.

LGBTI Inclusive Practice Forum

Alfred Health (in partnership with DHHS) held the first LGBTI Inclusive Practice Forum in June 2018. Members of HSAG helped plan this event and the agenda.

The forum was a great success - more than 180 attended, including representatives from every metropolitan health service and many LGBTI consumers. The forum closed with a panel discussing their lived experience of using health services.

Missed opportunities for HIV diagnosis review

In July 2018, the results of an Alfred Health research project about the missed opportunities for HIV diagnosis was showcased. It showed that the number of patients tested for HIV doubled to 20 per cent following education to General Medical staff about HIV indicator conditions.

HSAG discussed the importance of increasing awareness of when HIV tests should be completed and recommended investigating how Alfred Health's new Electronic Medical Record could be used to alert clinicians of a HIV test indicator condition.

What is HSAG?

Alfred Health's HIV Services Advisory Group (HSAG) has been helping Alfred Health plan for future services and identify community needs and future trends in HIV care. The group includes community members and advocacy groups as well as clinical, academic and government representatives.

HSAG meets every two months at the Positive Living Centre in Prahran and is chaired by Professor Andrew Way, Chief Executive, Alfred Health.

HSAG Membership

Community and Advocacy Group members

- Mr Philip Elphinstone
- Mr David Menadue
- Mr Max Niggel
- Mr Simon Ruth
- Mr Bernie Slagtman

Other representatives

- Prof Christopher (Kit) Fairley, Director, Melbourne Sexual Health Centre/Professor of Public Health, Central Clinical School, Monash University
- Prof Jenny Hoy, Director HIV Medicine, Alfred Health
- Prof Mark Stooze, Burnet Institute
- Prof Andrew Way (Chair), Chief Executive, Alfred Health
- Katrina Lewis, Lead for Patient Experience and Consumer Participation, Alfred Health
- The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is also represented at this meeting.

Join HSAG

Alfred Health is seeking applications from healthcare consumers and members of the community to join the Alfred Health HIV Services Advisory Committee. If you would like to find out more, contact k.lewis2@alfred.org.au



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