

By email: stephen.lodge@dhs.vic.gov.au

Dear Stephen,

Family Planning Victoria (FPV) has briefly peruse through the Review of the Health Act 1958 and would like to submit our view on the following –

Section 5:7 Human Immunodeficiency Virus

FPV is of the view that HIV specific pre and post test counselling provisions are important aspects of client care. HIV infection has no cure nor existing vaccine. This puts the infection in a more "serious" category. To remove regulation on pre-HIV counselling can have implications on duty of care, both to the clinician and to the client. The issue of informed consent, awareness of what the test entails and how that can affect the client and significant others are important aspects that are currently covered in the pre-test counselling. Many clients seek this test to get assurance that they will have a negative result. They are not usually mindful of the consequences of a positive result. It is through pre-test counselling that clients are given consistent information to enable them to make an informed decision to go ahead with the test or not. **Mandatory pre-HIV test counselling ensures standardized practice to cover and document all relevant aspects of issues that will enable a client to make an informed decision.** If this is removed from the regulation, there is a risk of possible gaps in information to the client and the issue of giving informed decision may come into question.

Thanks for the opportunity to raise this issue.

Lynne

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