

Priority Action Area 2: Sexual and Reproductive Health

Initiative 2.1: The new Royal Women's Hospital Project

To further enhance the level of care and support provided by the Royal Women's Hospital.

Progress and Achievements:

The relocation to the new Royal Women's Hospital site is on schedule for June 2008. The ward design for the new hospital provides for 17 birth rooms, 3 assessment rooms and a small increase in the total number of maternity beds including a swing ward which can flex to provide either gynaecology beds or overflow antenatal beds. The design of the new hospital will offer flexibility to increase maternity or other clinical services in response to future changes in demand.

Initiative 2.2: "You never know who you'll meet": Youth Safe Sex Media and Marketing Campaign"

To raise awareness of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and promote safe sex through condom use by 18-25 year olds.

Progress and Achievements:

The campaign, a component of the Victorian Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2006-2009, ran from June–December 2007. It received broad exposure in; cinema, radio and print media, 243 city cafes, 179 regional venues, 17 TAFES and Universities. Initial feedback has shown a high recall rate and a positive change in frequency of condom use among young people.

Initiative 2.3: Chlamydia Prevalence and Testing Research Pilot Project

To establish and deliver a pilot opportunistic testing program for high risk women (defined as those sexually active and aged between 16 to 24 years) attending general practitioners and health care agencies.

Progress and Achievements:

Twelve primary health care services have been recruited to undertake a trial

study from May–November 2008, which seeks to:

- determine the prevalence of chlamydia among women screened
- establish whether a \$5 reimbursement to GPs will increase chlamydia testing
- increase provider awareness of chlamydia infection.

The findings will identify opportunities for implementing a targeted opportunistic screening program for chlamydia in the future.

Initiative 2.4: Health Promotion priorities: Sexual and Reproductive Health

Develop an Action Plan focusing on sexual and reproductive health, as part of the implementation of statewide health promotion priorities for 2007–2012 to improve overall health and reduce health inequalities.

Progress and Achievements:

A departmental Working Group has been established to oversee the development of a sexual and reproductive health promotion framework and practitioner resources.

Initiative 2.5: Promoting primary maternity services

To ensure high quality birthing services which make the best use of the complementary skills of midwives, general practitioners and obstetricians.

Progress and Achievements:

Caseload midwifery model of care is being implemented at the Royal Women's Hospital, Barwon Health and soon at Sunshine Hospital.

Funds have been allocated under the Rural Maternity Initiative (RMI) to continue to enhance maternity care in rural areas. The RMI has been reported as having very positive impacts on rural birthing services and maternity care.

In 2008 funding of \$490,000 has been provided for 7 advanced rural specialist training posts, \$350,000 for 6 GP Procedural Obstetrics posts and an extra \$30,000 for another 3 GP extended skills posts.

Workforce initiatives include nursing scholarships and education programs including 15 midwifery scholarships, the Victorian Maternity Education Program to be offered across 11 sites in 2008, and a midwifery refresher course developed and promoted.

Initiative 2.6: Koori Maternity Program

To improve birthing experiences and birthing outcomes for Aboriginal women in Victoria.

Progress and Achievements:

Seven services have each employed a midwife and Aboriginal maternity health worker to provide a range of clinical, linkage, advocacy and health promotion services on site and through outreach service provision. Three services offer a model in which an Aboriginal health worker works with other clinical staff at the Aboriginal Community Controlled organisation and/or the local hospital.

Initiative 2.7: Cervical Screening Program – Implementation of the National Health and Medical Research Council Guidelines

To ensure Victorian women who have an abnormality detected through cervical screening (Pap smear) are managed according to best practice guidelines.

Progress and Achievements:

In February 2008 Victorian Cytology Register (VCS) entered a contract with the Commonwealth Government's Department of Health and Ageing to establish and manage the National HPV Program Register. VCS in conjunction with PapScreen Victoria (PSV) organised educational updates via the Divisions of GP to prepare providers. Nineteen updates have been delivered to 675 GPs, Nurse Practitioners, Practice Managers and council staff involved in HPV

vaccinations. PSV also conducted a statewide media campaign, including selected multicultural and Aboriginal media to remind women about the need for regular Pap smears, notwithstanding the new cervical cancer vaccine.

Initiative 2.8: Human Papilloma Virus Immunisation Program

To implement an immunisation against Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) program for Victorian girls and young women.

Progress and Achievements:

70% of girls in Years 7, 10, 11 and 12 have completed the full course of three doses of the HPV vaccine. The 2008 school based program for years 7, 9 and 10 is underway. Women aged 18-26 years are accessing the vaccine through GPs and other primary care providers. The vaccine will greatly reduce the number of cervical abnormalities detected on Pap smears, meaning less medical intervention in investigating these abnormalities.

Initiative 2.9: Statewide Pregnancy Advisory Service

To investigate existing service provision and best practice for pregnancy advisory services and develop a model applicable to Victoria.

Progress and Achievements:

A draft research report was submitted by Deakin University in March 2008. Following finalisation of the report, the results will be considered for future policy/program development.

Initiative 2.10: Family and Reproductive Rights Education Program realignment

To improve alignment between the principles, aims and objectives of the Family and Reproductive Rights Education Program (FARREP) and the *Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan*.

Progress and Achievements:

Through training, consultation with existing FARREP workers and agencies, development of department program guidelines and generic job descriptions,

the program has aligned more closely with the department's *Refugee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2005-2008*. FARREP education resources have been updated and consolidated to ensure consistency of messages about FGM and sexual and reproductive health of affected women and girls. Key health promotion target groups have been identified to ensure that approaches effectively meet the needs of girls, women, men and religious leaders for the prevention of FGM.

Initiative 2.11: The Women's Health East learning and development calendar

To improve 'health literacy' around sexual health and mental health promotion for service providers in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Progress and Achievements:

The majority of Eastern Metropolitan Region community health services have completed gender training by Women's Health East and are now undertaking planning incorporating a gender lens.

Initiative 2.12: Sexual Health Strategy – Knox Community Health Service

To enhance the sexual health outcomes for young people in the City of Knox.

Progress and Achievements:

Ongoing strategy as part of 3 year health promotion capacity building plan. Impact in terms of improvements for women to be assessed.

Initiative 2.13: Respect Protect Connect Program

To provide young women with information about and skills to identify violence, and encourage them to be proactive in gaining help and support if they were facing a situation involving domestic violence.

Progress and Achievements:

This ongoing initiative by Women's Health in the South East continues to have a high demand from secondary schools. An anti violence workshop in an Islamic school with 40 participants,

illustrates the increasing demand from faith-based schools for this program. Evaluation of the program has indicated that it is effective in altering young women's beliefs about violence and their ability to seek further information when confronted with bullying, harassment and violence.

Initiative 2.14: Women's Talk

To provide information to women with disabilities to increase their knowledge and awareness of sexual and reproductive health issues.

Progress and Achievements:

Two Central Bayside Community Health Service (CBCHS) women's health nurse pap test providers have undertaken specialised training to further develop their skills and knowledge in working with women with disabilities. Resources to increase knowledge and awareness regarding sexual and reproductive health issues have been developed, piloted and disseminated to supported residential services (SRS). CBCHS have scheduled follow up consultations with the women involved for late 2008.

Initiative 2.15: Girls Talk- Guys Talk

To develop a whole school program focused on young women's sexual and reproductive health.

Progress and Achievements:

Nearing the completion of its first year, the program has successfully worked in partnership with students, school staff, local agencies and parents to encourage young women to make more informed choices about their sexual health. An evaluation of *Girls Talk- Guys Talk* is currently underway. See also Key successes

Initiative 2.16: Kids Wanna Know

To educate young girls and their mothers about puberty, menstruation and specific body changes.

Progress and Achievements:

Conducted in two primary schools in the Ouyen area. Feedback from girls and

mothers reported improved learnings, communication and relationships. Mothers have provided parental peer support.

Initiative 2.17: *Girls in a Whirl*

To educate girls and mothers about body changes and to encourage and enhance better communication, self esteem and relationships.

Progress and Achievements:

Conducted in two community settings in Ouyen and Manangatang in 2008. Feedback from participants reports improved communication and relationships between girls and workers with girls feeling comfortable to seek sexual health information and referral from health workers.

Initiative 2.18: *Getting Chlamydia on the Radar*

To develop partnerships and programs focussing on the prevention of and screening for chlamydia.

Progress and Achievements:

Two young women's networks established in Horsham and Ballarat. Chlamydia information and marketing material has been produced in both regions, with young women actively involved in peer education, website development and information delivery.