

GETTING STEAMY

NURSE-LED SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR PRIORITY POPULATIONS: 40 YEARS OF INNOVATION AT WAAC IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BACKGROUND:

WAAC (FORMERLY THE WA AIDS COUNCIL) HAS SERVED AS THE PEAK BODY FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY HIV IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA FOR 40 YEARS. OVER TIME, WAAC HAS EXPANDED ITS SCOPE TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN, TRANSGENDER, AND GENDER-DIVERSE POPULATIONS, ADDRESSING NEEDS BEYOND HIV CARE.

METHODS:

WAAC OPERATES A NURSE-LED SEXUAL HEALTH AND STI TESTING SERVICE AT A MEN'S SEX-ON-PREMISES VENUE IN PERTH. THE CLINIC RUNS FOR TWO HOURS WEEKLY AND IS STAFFED BY AN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, TWO CONSULTING NURSES, A NURSE DEDICATED TO MPOX VACCINATION, AND A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER PROVIDING ON-SITE PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PREP) AND DOXYCYCLINE POST-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (DOXYPEP) CONSULTATIONS AND PRESCRIPTIONS.

RESULTS:

THE SERVICE CONSISTENTLY MANAGES 20-30 CLIENTS DURING EACH TWO-HOUR SESSION. THE MODEL ENABLES RAPID, TARGETED TESTING AND VACCINATION, AND INTEGRATES INNOVATIVE INTERVENTIONS, INCLUDING MPOX VACCINATION AND IMMEDIATE PREP/DOXYPEP ACCESS. ITS NURSE-LED STRUCTURE ALLOWS FOR HIGH CLIENT THROUGHPUT AND TIMELY RESPONSE TO EMERGING PUBLIC HEALTH NEEDS.

552
CLIENTS
SEEN

867
OCCASIONS
OF SERVICE

2,369
TESTS
COMPLETED

131
PREP
PRESCRIPTIONS

134
DOXY-PEP
PRESCRIPTIONS

131
MPOX
VACCINATIONS

ALL FIGURES FROM
JANUARY TO JUNE 2025

IMPACT

THE OUTREACH CLINIC AT PERTH STEAM WORKS HAS BROKEN DOWN STIGMA AND BARRIERS TO CARE BY EMBEDDING PEER WORKERS AND GAY-IDENTIFYING NURSES DIRECTLY INTO COMMUNITY SPACES. THIS MODEL HAS BUILT TRUST, NORMALISED SEXUAL HEALTH TESTING, AND ENABLED EARLIER DETECTION AND TREATMENT OF HIV, STIS, AND BBVs. ITS IMPACT EXTENDS BEYOND CLINICAL OUTCOMES, FOSTERING DIGNITY, SAFETY, AND BELONGING FOR GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

WAAC RECEIVES FUNDING FROM THE WA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO SUPPORT ITS CLINICAL SERVICES.