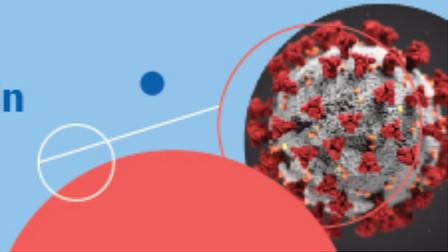


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sexual health workforce bulletin
love in the time of covid-19



A project of the Taskforce on BBVs, Sexual Health and COVID-19

Sexual Health Workforce Bulletin

Love in the time of COVID-19 #7

31 August 2020

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Welcome to the seventh edition of the Sexual Health Workforce Bulletin. These bulletins aim to provide the sexual health workforce with information on changes in clinical practice, health service innovation, medical education, emerging research and useful resources.

The bulletin includes:

- [Metropolitan Perth syphilis outbreak](#)
- [Updates from Children by Choice, HealthPathways, RANZCOG, and the SPHERE coalition](#)
- [Upcoming webinars and recordings](#)
- [Education on offer from ASHM and other training providers](#)
- [News and research](#)
- [Useful resources for the workforce](#)

The bulletin has been developed by the ASHM Sexual Health Program with expert input by members of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) Australasian Chapter of Sexual Health Medicine (AChSHM) and the Taskforce on BBVs, Sexual Health and COVID-19.

We hope that you are finding this bulletin useful, and are keen to receive your submissions and ideas for future editions (please email these to sexualhealth@ashm.org.au). Please distribute this bulletin through your networks.

Stay safe and well,

Dr Vincent Cornelisse

ASHM Clinical Advisor

Medical Unit Manager and Staff Specialist, Kirketon Road Centre

&

Jessica Michaels

ASHM Sexual Health Program Manager

[For more information or to subscribe to the bulletin click here](#)

Metropolitan Perth Syphilis Outbreak

Infectious syphilis cases are increasing significantly in the Perth metropolitan area, leading WA Health to declare an outbreak this month.

More cases are being detected in vulnerable populations, including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, people that are experiencing homelessness and people who inject drugs. Of concern are the women of reproductive age because of the risk of congenital syphilis.

We encourage health professionals in Perth and other outbreak-affected regions to complete ASHM's [Syphilis Outbreak Training](#), accessible via the [ASHM LMS](#). The training has been updated to include information on the Perth outbreak



Log in with a free account and navigate to the STIs/BBVs category. The training is approved as an RACGP activity (4 CPD points) and endorsed by the Australian College of Nursing (2 CPD hours).

Read more:

- [Metropolitan Perth syphilis outbreak alert \(WA Health\)](#)
- [Infectious syphilis outbreak](#) (Australian Government Department of Health)

Sector updates

These updates were graciously supplied by our colleagues in the workforce. For any questions or commentary please reach out to the organisations listed.

**CHILDREN
BY CHOICE**
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

Children by Choice Regional, Rural and Remote Abortion Access Project

The Regional Rural and Remote Abortion Access Project (RRRAAP) is a three year project which Children by Choice commenced in August 2018, aiming to address abortion access inequity in Queensland.

Please contact Children by Choice if you live in regional, rural or remote Queensland and:

- You or your client need **financial support** to access abortion care
- you need support to **access ultrasound equipment or training** related to unplanned pregnancy and abortion care
- you require **training** in unplanned pregnancy decision making counselling, reproductive coercion or post abortion care
- you need **support or facilitation connecting and networking** with reproductive health care providers, women's health services or sexual health clinics in your region

So far, RRRAAP has...

- **Provided financial support to over 100 women** and pregnant people from regional, rural and remote Queensland to access abortion care (including cost of procedure, transport and accommodation costs)
- **Delivered training and information sessions to over 500 regional, rural and remote health and community workers**
- **Donated two handheld portable ultrasound devices** to rural health services
- **Provided scholarships to 18 rural health workers** to improve their skills in supporting unplanned pregnancy and abortion care
- **Delivered the abortion doula training pilot to 9 doulas** in March 2020, in partnership with the Australian Doula College. Abortion doulas provide emotional, informational and physical support to a person accessing abortion care. **We have already begun linking doulas and clients!**

Please contact rachaels@childrenbychoice.org.au for more information!



HealthPathways, available in most regions throughout Australia and New Zealand, is a clinical and referral resource providing guidance for medical and health service providers across a broad range of health concerns. The information has been developed by general practitioners in partnership with identified subject matter experts with

the information contained in the 'pathway' designed to reflect the local services and management. The pathways contain a range of resources and information specific to clinicians, while some regions also have patient based resources as well.

These resources are continually maintained and undergo regular formal review processes to ensure that the information provided is accurate, up-to-date, and represents best clinical practices. Additionally, the pathways provide up-to-date information on local service delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including advice for client facing services.

[The Nepean Blue Mountains HealthPathways](#) program has worked with the local public health system to develop a range of sexual health pathways, and is continuing to liaise with health service providers to improve and incorporate service redesign opportunities wherever possible to enable patients to connect to the right care, at the right time, and with the right healthcare provider.

To find and register for access to a HealthPathways program in your region please refer to <https://www.healthpathwayscommunity.org/Home/Access-to-HealthPathways>

COVID-19 and Pregnancy in Resource-Limited Environments

RANZCOG has updated its resource, *COVID-19 in Pregnancy: A guide for resource-limited environments*.

This is a general guide based on RCOG guidelines, with advice from RANZCOG, WHO and UNFPA also included. This guide will be especially useful in communities and environments where testing for COVID-19 is limited or not available. O&G departments are welcome to adapt this guide to their work environments.

[Read more](#)

[Download the resource](#)



SPHERE

NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Sexual and
Reproductive Health for Women in Primary Care

Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health COVID-19 Coalition Updates

The Coalition continues to produce vital work on sexual and reproductive health during the pandemic.

1. Provision of emergency contraception: a consensus statement

Access to emergency contraception is essential, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when there may be increased rates of unprotected sex and reproductive coercion and reduced access to regular forms of contraception.

The Coalition has produced a consensus statement with recommendations for primary care, pharmacy and policy. [View it here.](#)

2. Update on advocacy related to maintaining the availability of telehealth for early medical abortion

In July the Government introduced further refinements to the COVID-19 MBS item numbers. GPs and other medical practitioners working in general practice must only perform a COVID-19 telehealth service where they have an existing relationship with the patient, or record for compliance purposes how their patients qualify for any exemptions to this requirement.

The Coalition is concerned that these restrictions may exclude many women from being able to access telehealth for the purpose of early medical abortion, particularly young women, those living in rural and regional areas who do not have a regular GP, or whose GP or local general practice does not provide early medical abortion.

The Coalition continues to advocate around this essential issue, and encourages everyone to support this cause by writing to Minister Hunt and their local member of parliament directly.

3. Shortage of norethisterone-containing pills in Australia: advice for GPs

A global shortage of contraceptive pills containing the progestogen norethisterone (NET) has led to shortages in Australia since March 2020.

- [The Coalition has produced advice for GPs on this topic – view here.](#)
- [These recommendations have been summarised in an infographic – download here.](#)

4. Consensus statement on contraceptive method considerations for individuals with active COVID-19 infection

The Coalition has produced interim guidance in relation to contraceptive method considerations for individuals with active COVID-19 infection; [view it here.](#)

All SPHERE Coalition outputs can be downloaded at <https://www.spherecre.org/coalition-outputs>

Webinars

Register for these upcoming webinars:

Sexual and reproductive health update: lessons learned from COVID-19

This workshop will update General Practitioners on changes in sexual and reproductive health provision and services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Amy Moten (SHINE SA) and Dr Catriona Melville (Marie Stopes Australia) will raise awareness around STI testing and treatment, contraception and abortion in a COVID-19 context, and the vital ongoing role GPs play in delivering this care. This activity has been allocated 3 RACGP CPD points; ACRRM accreditation pending.

8 September 2020, 7:00pm – 8:30pm AEST

[Register here](#)

Optimising the Care of People Living with HIV: An update on management of comorbidities to improve patient health

As the population ages and the life expectancy of people living with HIV continues to rise, a growing proportion of Australians living with HIV are now aged over 50. It is therefore essential that healthcare providers remain confident in managing common conditions these individuals may experience.

The Optimising Care series is a multi-day webinar series to update the HIV healthcare workforce on current diagnostic and management principles of common medical conditions. It aims to maximise the health outcomes and quality of life of all Australians living with HIV.

12, 19, & 26 September from 9am AEST

[Find out more and register](#)

Enhancing access to contraception and abortion during COVID-19 and beyond

Access to sexual health services are essential for reproductive autonomy and wellbeing. Changes to the provision of contraception and early medication abortion (EMA) during COVID-19 have potential to having long lasting implications beyond the current pandemic. This webinar will discuss the impact of COVID-19 on these services and also support health professionals to continue to facilitate access via telehealth consults and face to face consultations where possible.

Speakers: Dr Deborah Bateson and Dr Amy Moten

22 September, 7pm AEST

[Find out more and register](#)

Access these recordings:

Recordings of all RANZCOG COVID-19 and O&G webinars are online. Webinar details are as follows:

[Webinar 1](#), presentations from:

- Dr Rebecca Mitchell of the RANZCOG Global Health Committee, *An introduction to COVID-19 in pregnancy for resource-limited environments*
- Professor Glen Mola of University of Papua New Guinea, *Maintaining best outcomes as possible in the time of the COVID pandemic in PICs*
- Catherine Breen Kamkong and Pulane Tlebere of UNFPA Asia-Pacific and UNFPA Pacific Sub-Regional Office respectively, *Safeguarding access to sexual and reproductive health services in the face of COVID pandemic*

[Webinar 2](#), presentations from:

- Professor Caroline Homer and Rachel Smith of the Burnet Institute, *Maternity care and COVID-19: Practical considerations*
- Assistant Professor Amanda Noovao-Hill of Fiji National University, *Anticipating COVID-19: The Fiji Experience*

[Webinar 3](#), presentations from:

- Dr Sybil Bravo of the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital, *COVID-19 in Pregnancy: The University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH) Experience*
- Dr Fatima Shajahan and Shimu Akhter of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, *Intrapartum care and COVID-19: The Bangladesh Experience*

Individual presentations are available on request.

For more information, please contact:

RANZCOG at ranzcog@ranzcog.edu.au

Education

STI and BBV Nursing: An Introduction

This ASHM's two-part workshop will provide nurses and midwives with the introductory skills to incorporate STI and BBV screening within their workplace.

This activity is equivalent to 4 CPD hours and is endorsed by ASHNA.

Workshop 1: 22 September 2020, 6:30-8:00pm AEST

Workshop 2: 29 September 2020, 6:30-8:00pm AEST

[Register here](#)

Children by Choice workshops have been redeveloped for delivery via Zoom:

- Introduction to Unplanned Pregnancy Counselling: 1 September and Applied Practice on 8 September
- Introduction to Reproductive Coercion & Contraceptive options: September 9 and Applied Practice on September 16
- Introduction to Post-Abortion Counselling: October 14 and Applied Practice on October 21

[Click for more information and registration](#)

The University of Melbourne' Health Economics Short Courses

These short courses have been designed to assist policymakers, clinicians, researchers, managers and others working in the health sector with an understanding of health economic issues, and how this can aid decision making.

Introduction to Cost-Effectiveness Analysis in Health is an introductory course which provides participants with a better understanding of health priority setting and the application of cost-effectiveness analysis. *Tuesday 8th of September | 9am to 5pm AEST | Online via Zoom | The course will include the following modules:*

- *Introduction to Health Economics*
- *Cost measurement*
- *Outcome measurement*
- *Interpretation of economic evaluation results for policy*

Practical Methods for Health Economic Evaluation is a three-day advanced course in methods for health economic evaluation. The course covers study design principles, techniques for analysing costs and outcomes, introduction to decision models, Markov modelling and its applications.

21st to 23rd of October | Online via Zoom | The course will include the following modules:

- *Study design principles*
- *Techniques for analysing costs*
- *Techniques for analysing outcomes*
- *Introduction to decision models*
- *Markov modelling and applications*

Registrations are open and are accessible through the link <http://go.unimelb.edu.au/wp8r>

Discounts available for students and professionals from low-to-middle income countries, via emailing health-economics@unimelb.edu.au

Note: content and most examples in the short courses are from Australia, however, the principles can be applied internationally. Courses are required to be attended live.

ASHM education:

- [ASHM upcoming training](#)
- [ASHM online learning](#)

Other training providers:

- [Children by Choice](#)
- [Family Planning NSW](#)
- [Sexual Health Quarters](#)
- [ShineSA](#)
- [The Albion Centre](#)
- [True Relationships & Reproductive Health](#)

News and research

- The impact of COVID-19 on contraception and abortion care policy and practice: experiences from selected countries ([BMJ Journals](#))
- Family planning: Billions of dollars saved by contraception ([ALJAZEERA](#))
- How has coronavirus disrupted family planning? ([ALJAZEERA](#))
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the era of Covid-19 ([Taylor & Francis Online](#))
- Free pads and tampons now available to all Victorian public school students in Australian first ([The Guardian](#))
- At-home telemedicine for medical abortion in Australia: a qualitative study of patient experiences and recommendations ([Monash University, Research Output](#))
- Pandemic seen changing how women get reproductive health care ([Thomson Reuters Foundation](#))
- Abortion in Wagga, at Gateway Health made more complicated by NSW-Victorian border closure ([THE WIMMERA MAIL-TIMES](#))
- 'Everyone kept congratulating me.' I fell pregnant in a pandemic, with a baby I didn't want to keep. ([MAMAMIA](#))
- Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea: Shifting Age-Based Positivity Among Young Females, 2010–2017 ([American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Science Direct](#))

Articles and studies included in this section have not been reviewed by the Taskforce, however we endeavour to only include content from reputable sources.



**hiv&aid+
sexualhealth
2020 VIRTUAL**

Joint Australasian
HIV&AIDS and
Sexual Health
Conferences

**Registration
Now Open!**

Registration Deadline: Monday 9 November 2020
hivshconferences2020.com.au

The [ASHM Scholarship Program](#) is pleased to advise that scholarships will be available for the [2020 Joint Australasian HIV&AIDS + Sexual Health Conferences: VIRTUAL](#).

Opportunities are available for:

- Australian clinicians, nurses and pharmacists
- Academics/researchers
- New Zealander clinicians, nurses and pharmacists
- Pacific Islander health care professionals
- Community applicants

Applications will open on **Tuesday 1st September**.

To be added to the mailing list to receive a notification when applications are open, or if you require further information please email scholarships@ashm.org.au or contact us on +61 2 8204 0770.

Resources

AHPRA: [Telehealth guidance for health practitioners](#)

ASHM: [Taskforce on BBVs, sexual health and COVID-19](#)

CERSH: [April 2020 News Update \(subscribe to future editions here\)](#)

Marie Stopes Australia:

[Sexual and reproductive health rights in Australia situational report](#) / [Service delivery updates](#)

PositiveLifeNSW: [Getting practical about COVID-19 and HIV](#)

RACGP: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for GPs](#)

RACP: [How the college is supporting you](#)

RANZCOG: [COVID-19 information hub](#)

Scarlet Alliance: [COVID-19 impact and response for sex workers](#)

SPHERE: [SRH and COVID-19 Coalition](#)

SRHM: [Collection of papers on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the era of COVID-19](#)

Call for contributions

We are now calling for submissions for the next edition of this bulletin. Below are some examples of the type of content we would like to include in the bulletin, relating to sexual, reproductive and transgender health:

- Practice changes as a result of COVID-19
- Implications for care and communities
- Innovative responses and adaptations
- Telehealth challenges and successes
- Education opportunities (e.g. online training and conferences)
- Emerging research
- Useful resources

However, all contributions are welcomed. Please send any contributions to sexualhealth@ashm.org.au.

Submissions for the next edition close on **Monday 05 October**, with the bulletin to be published the following week. Submissions after **Monday 05 October** will go toward subsequent editions.

Please forward this email to your networks.

Please forward this bulletin to your networks. We welcome submissions for future editions of this bulletin from any individuals or organisations working in sexual health. Please email sexualhealth@ashm.org.au.



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Developing a sustainable HIV,
viral hepatitis and sexual health
workforce for 30 years.

Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis
and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM)

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CIRCULATION INFORMATION

ASHM is a peak professional society representing a multidisciplinary health workforce in HIV, viral hepatitis and sexual health. We have a membership of over 3500 and almost 60 organisational members providing reach to a large majority of health care worker activity involved in the sector.

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