

Victorian Rural Clinical Network – Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: November 2019

Meeting Agenda: Dr Paddy Moore from The Women's led the discussion around key clinical considerations, including:

- **Training opportunity for Medical Practitioners**

The Royal Women's Hospital offer rural Medical Practitioners the opportunity to develop and extend their abortion care surgical skills. The training is provided by Dr Paddy Moore, Head of Abortion and Contraception at the Women's. The training aims to support providers of medical or surgical abortion to extend their current scope of practice. Three rural GP Obstetricians (GPO) have participated in the training during the year. These GPOs have had the opportunity extend their skills, gain confidence and then provide an expanded service in their practice setting. The training provides the assurance of being able to offer continuity of care throughout the abortion pathway and to address service barriers and gaps that may exist in the practice setting.

Applicants need to apply to be accredited by The Women's and are appointed to an honorary position for a time limited period.

To find out more contact Cath Hannon, Project Manager Sexual & Reproductive Health Clinical Champion Project. E: Catherine.Hannon@thewomens.org.au

- **Providing extended skills training to rural GP Registrars**

Dr Ling Li, GP Registrar at Gateway Health, Wodonga, is currently undertaking a GP extended skills training position at Gateway Health. The position was initiated by Dr Catherine Orr and facilitated by Murray City Country Coast (MCCC) GP Training. It is a 12 month position and a great opportunity to extend skills and knowledge in a primary care setting targeting population groups and issues such as sexual health (STIs, HIV, S100, PrEP), transgender health, women's health (medical abortion, IUD procedure). It is a unique opportunity to see people in the context of their own community, compared to alternative training opportunities offered in hospital based settings in Melbourne. Training is well supported by GPs and entails a nurse team work approach with a nurse led model of care and with established policy, guidelines and procedures to guide practice.

- **Working with adolescents requesting medical abortion: challenges and issues to consider**

Key issues in relation to adolescent MTOP were discussed, including Gillick competence, support networks, coercion, time sensitivity of decision-making, and VCAT Special Medical Procedures.

- Gillick competence is an essential part of working with adolescents, specifically in relation to them understanding the procedure, side effects and implications of making/not making decision for treatment. Health practitioners are encouraged to consider assessments from other health professionals in order to facilitate competency i.e. from a psychiatrist for mental health issues.

- Identifying pre-existing supports and networks available to adolescent is a key aspect that makes a significant difference in relation to outcomes.
- It is important that health practitioners are aware of coercion and separate out views and wishes of others who may impose their viewpoint.
- It is important to allow adolescents enough space and time to reach their own decision, and to acknowledge the difficulty in making a decision in the context of a time limiting procedure.
- Health practitioners are encouraged to use 1800 My Options to identify options, such as access to surgical abortion.
- There is a process by the Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) for [Special Medical Procedure](#) for those deemed not competent. It is used for non-reversible procedures i.e. sterilisation, abortion, hysterectomy, donation of an organ, and enrolment in a medical trial. In an emergency situation, VCAT have the capacity to meet within 48 hours.