

A NSW state-wide online condom ordering initiative for youth workforce to address equity

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Background/Purpose:

Play Safe Programs condom delivery service provides free access to condoms to services and institutions across NSW that provide a service to young people. Designed to address gaps in HIV and STI prevention, the project aims to encourage safe sex practices in priority populations through priority settings identified in the NSW STI Strategy 2016-2020; as well as increase equity of condom access to regional and rural areas.

Approach:

Through an online ordering form on the Play Safe Pro website's landing page, recipients can order condoms (up to 144 per service per month) delivered to their service free of charge. Local health districts have promoted this newly established online ordering system through health education, electronic direct mail, posters and email promotion. Preliminary data is collected along with the order to capture brief information about the requesting service and relevant condom demands. This data is confidential and reviewed monthly by the Access to Condoms leaders' group to assess this initiative.

Outcomes/Impact:

During the first quarter of 2020 (the beginning of the COVID19), a total 147 orders were made across all LHDs in NSW. There were a range of youth-oriented services, targeting STI priority populations such as Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, university students, homelessness youth, LGBTI youth; people with mental health conditions and people with religious affiliations. While the average monthly order for Q1 and Q2 of 2020 was 37.3 orders/month (5,376 condoms), the volume is fluctuating as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, with 86 orders in February and 76 in May.

Innovation and Significance:

This is the first online free condom ordering mechanism directed towards youth workforces in Australia. This program is run through the NSW STI Program unit and complements existing sexual health services by reaching broader youth groups beyond the specific HIV/STI priority groups.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None