

# **INTERACTIVE ONLINE ABORTION PROVIDER MAPS TACKLE ABORTION ACCESS INEQUITIES IN VICTORIA AND QUEENSLAND**

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## **Background/Purpose:**

Access to abortion care in Australia remains hampered by inconsistencies in where and how abortion is provided. Many General Practitioners (GPs) hesitate to incorporate medical termination of pregnancy (MTO) into their practices, due to stigma and workload concerns. Rural pregnant people have described contacting up to 5 GPs before being directed to an appropriate abortion service. Addressing barriers to abortion provision, and minimising social and practical barriers for abortion seekers, are vital to improving equitable sexual and reproductive health (SRH) outcomes.

## **Approach:**

1800 My Options in Victoria and Children by Choice in Queensland have developed a novel solution to abortion access barriers, creating state-wide interactive online maps of abortion providers, incorporating details about abortion providers' locations, contact information and services. They are supported by telephone services, who help manage demand and further support abortion seekers. These maps are used by abortion seekers and their professional and personal support people.

## **Outcomes/Impact:**

An evaluation of the Victorian map found it supported and encouraged MTO provision by establishing a trustworthy network of providers, facilitating professional support, and demonstrating no adverse events for publicly listed abortion providers. Users/clients reported improvements in awareness of and access to SRH services. Close to half of both service's clients report being on low income and/or holding a healthcare card.

## **Innovation and Significance:**

Normalising abortion and addressing barriers to provision and access are vital to reducing the financial, personal and health burden associated with inequitable abortion access in Australia. The online abortion provider maps are proving a creative and effective way to improve abortion access, likely also reducing women's exposure to stigma and judgement as they seek appropriate services, and contributing to more equitable SRH outcomes for women and pregnant people in Victoria and Queensland.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

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