

FROM SILOS TO INTEGRATION: MOVING TO AN INTEGRATED APPROACH FOR VICTORIA'S HIV, STI AND VIRAL HEPATITIS RESPONSE

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Background/Purpose:

Strategies to address blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections have traditionally been single-disease focused. Recognising the different strategies operate within the same delivery system, with similar priority populations and risk factors, an integrated approach to addressing BBV/STI and reducing their impact on Victorians was recommended.

Approach:

Extensive public consultations were undertaken for the renewal of Victoria's HIV, STI and viral hepatitis response for 2021-2025. The consultations noted the fragmented nature of the current system and identified the need for a more coordinated response to address the diversity, intersectionality and complexity of Victorians impacted by BBV and STI. Integration was recommended beyond the sexual health sector to reproductive health, alcohol and other drugs, mental health and housing services to ensure Victorians living with or affected by BBV and STI receive high-quality and culturally appropriate standard of care, irrespective of which part of the system they first connect with. The integrated approach will also include the first ever Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander BBV and STI response, recognising the government's commitment to improving the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal Victorians.

Outcomes/Impact:

An integrated approach will move the focus from the disease to the patient accessing the care they need, where and when it is needed. The system enablers outlined in the current disease strategies (stigma and discrimination, workforce capacity, service integration and data, research and evaluation) will be enhanced by having shared actions aimed at strengthening the delivery system, rather than actions within a single-disease system.

Innovation and Significance:

This is Victoria's first integrated BBV and STI approach, and has been developed with input from representatives across the health system. Funded agencies will be asked to align their funded activities with the integrated approach.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.