

1800 4 CHOICE: Breaking down barriers to abortion care in the digital age – a curated platform connecting community and providers

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Background/Purpose:

On 27 March 2024, landmark legislation came into effect removing significant barriers to access to abortion in Western Australia (WA).

However, abortion providers don't often advertise their services due to stigma and fear of backlash. The community remains in the dark as to where to go in the event of unintended pregnancy and confused regarding their rights.

Approach:

In response, Sexual Health Quarters (SHQ) launched the *1800 4 Choice* service aiming to provide up-to-date, evidence-based and non-directive information, improve visibility of abortion services, and connect the community with pro-choice local providers. It includes 3 helplines (phone, email and webchat), a website, and an interactive map of WA listing essential abortion services vetted by the project team.

Outcomes/Impact:

To date, the helplines have received over 1000 queries; the website and the interactive map, over 6000 and over 1000 visits respectively, from various regions, genders, and socio-economic, cultural and professional backgrounds. The main reasons for contacting the service are to obtain contact information for providers and fees, to understand the difference between different abortion methods, and clarification about the legislation.

100% of users say the information they received was helpful and felt supported to make their decisions. 98% believe this project increased their knowledge of local providers with almost 70% making an appointment within 48 hours of contacting the service. Improved understanding of the WA legislation was confirmed by 95% of users. This is echoed by the 300+ providers registered with the interactive map so far, who also strongly believe that this project has improved access to abortion services in WA and would recommend that other service providers register with *18004choice*.

Innovation and Significance:

This service is the first of its kind in WA, making a significant impact in the community and improving timely access to abortion services in WA.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None