

“DON’T LET ANYONE CLOSE THIS PLACE DOWN”. PREGNANCY ADVISORY CENTRE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA – A PUBLIC HEALTH MODEL OF ABORTION CARE.

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The Pregnancy Advisory Centre (PAC) in South Australia is a unique model of care in the Australian abortion provision sector: a publicly funded, multidisciplinary, freestanding service that provides specialised medical and surgical abortion care.

As we acknowledge the milestone of abortion being decriminalised in all states and territories in Australia, we must face the reality that limited availability of affordable abortion care is the next barrier to access in Australia. We assert that abortion care belongs within the public health care system as essential healthcare.

We present the key aspects of our model of care in the hope this may provide a precedent, and assist interstate providers to advocate within their own public health care systems:

Apprentice-based model for training future service providers, including interstate providers: PAC has three doctors that are skilled in surgical abortion techniques in the second trimester – a skillset for which there is no formal training program in specialist colleges. Future provision of this service is planned for by actively training consultants (who hold a FRACGP and/or DRANZCOG) at PAC in surgical skills. PAC doctors have trained interstate providers to ensure access is possible interstate.

Social work counselling services located on site, inclusive of decision-making and family and domestic violence counselling services.

Ultrasound services located on site: this enables a single appointment for those choosing medical abortion, and eliminates costs associated with a private radiology provider to confirm intrauterine gestation of <9 weeks.

Same-day surgical service for rural/ remote patients.

Nurse and midwife staff working to the top of their scope.

Future challenges for PAC include providing gold-standard care for second-trimester services >24 weeks, as the surgical service is not co-located with a maternity hospital.

Pregnancy Advisory Centre aims to provide choice at every gestation, and abortion care that is high quality, pro-choice and person-centred.

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