

BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES OF CO-LOCATING A TARGETED TRANS AND GENDER DIVERSE HEALTH CENTRE WITH A MSM SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE.

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Background/Approach: In February 2016, the VAC opened Australia's first peer led trans and gender diverse (TGD) health service – *Equinox*. *Equinox* is co-located with PRONTO!, a Rapid HIV and STI Point of Care (POCT) Testing Service.

Australian research suggests that TGD people are more likely to encounter negative experiences in health care settings due to harassment, discrimination and lack of cultural competency. This results in low access and retention in health services. TGD people are over represented in statistics related to alcohol and drug use, mental health, suicidality and homelessness, all of which are social determinants of health that increase the risk of acquiring HIV.

Analysis/Argument: By co-locating *Equinox* in an established HIV/STI POCT, the TGD community has been able to access a service in an environment rich in sexual health information and promotion. *Equinox* was co-designed with VAC's trans advisory group and by engaging the community in decision making processes there is a greater trust and investment in utilising the service. As a result, there has been an uptake of testing for TGD clients and it has proven to be an effective TGD recruitment point for the PrEPX trial.

Outcome/Results: Since co-location of the services, PRONTO! has seen a 24% increase in TGD people accessing testing services.

The development of a set of best practice guidelines for working with TGD people in STI testing services has ensured that PRONTO! services are not only inclusive but also culturally and medically appropriate for a priority population at risk of acquiring HIV.

Conclusions/Applications: Rapid HIV POCT Service centres can contribute to the increase of sexual health knowledge, testing and well being of TGD people by creating inclusive spaces, appropriate registration documents and developing best practice guidelines to ensure that service provision is culturally sensitive and medically appropriate to the TGD community.