

Title: Improving Access to Early Medical Abortion Through a Selective-Scan Pathway: A Quality Assurance Evaluation from Far North Queensland

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1. Cairns Sexual Health Service

Theme – Clinical/Practice-based.

Background / Purpose

Delays in obtaining pre-treatment ultrasound remain a significant barrier to timely early medical abortion in Far North Queensland. In late 2025, Cairns Sexual Health Service (CSHS) implemented a selective-scan pathway that allows early medical abortion to proceed without routine ultrasound when menstrual history is certain, and no risk factors for ectopic pregnancy are present. This Quality Assurance (QA) evaluation aimed to determine whether the selective-scan pathway is improving access to timely care, maintaining clinical safety, and supporting the goals of the Queensland Termination of Pregnancy Action Plan 2032.

Methods / Approach

This QA activity uses routinely collected clinical, administrative, and anonymous patient feedback data for all clients accessing early medical abortion at CSHS between October 2025 and October 2026. Primary outcomes include overall time from first contact to MS-2 Step prescription and time to completion of care, along with routinely recorded safety indicators such as complications, follow-up outcomes, and need for further intervention. Secondary outcomes include aggregated patient experience feedback and service efficiency patterns. Quantitative data will be analysed descriptively, and free-text feedback will undergo content analysis. An interim analysis will occur in July 2026 and will inform this presentation.

Outcome / Impact / Results

The interim evaluation will report on whether the selective-scan pathway improves access to early care, maintains safety comparable to the scan-required pathway, enhances workflow efficiency, and supports positive patient experience through reduced delays and fewer logistical barriers.

Conclusion / Innovation and Significance

This evaluation will provide the first Queensland Health service-level evidence on selective-scan implementation within a public sexual health service. Findings will inform local pathway refinement, strengthen equitable access to early abortion care, and contribute to statewide efforts to operationalise evidence-based models that reduce barriers and improve timely reproductive healthcare.

Conflict of Interest: None.

AI Use Declaration: AI was used for language editing and structuring of this abstract.