

Media release

For immediate issue

Pioneering Telehealth Service and Medication Delivery Revolutionises Access to Medical Abortion for Regional Victorians

Sexual Health Victoria (SHV) has announced its introduction of a telehealth medical abortion service, providing crucial reproductive care to Victorians through a strategic partnership with a pharmaceutical provider network. This transformative service addresses the pressing issue of limited access to medical abortion services and medications, particularly in regional areas.

Sexual Health Victoria CEO Caroline Mulcahy said recent findings reveal only one in 10 GPs in Australia actively engage in prescribing abortion medications.

“This program is crucial in navigating substantial hurdles preventing nearly half of Victorians from accessing local care due to a scarcity of prescribers. SHV’s telehealth service, alongside medication delivery through postal services, stands out as a cornerstone of accessibility,” Mulcahy said.

“These challenges span geographical and social spectrums, and provide obstacles for healthcare providers and medication distribution.

“It is essential all Victorians can access essential abortion care and this important telehealth service will ensure that.

"This innovative service not only bridges gaps imposed by distance, time and resources, but also affirms our dedication to building a healthcare system that is truly equitable and inclusive."

Research supports telehealth as a practical solution. Working in collaboration with a pharmaceutical provider network, SHV supports accessibility and availability of medical abortion medications delivered confidentially via mail when the person prefers not to use a local pharmacy or if supply is unavailable.

Service users will receive guidance on steps to identify and address any potential issues, along with instructions on how to independently assess the success of their abortion. Research indicates that self-assessment is not only a safe option but is also preferred by individuals undergoing abortion compared to in-clinic follow-ups.

The Hon. Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas supports the scheme and Victoria's commitment to ensuring access to health services for everyone.

"Every woman should be able to access safe, legal, and dignified reproductive choices – that's why Victoria has the most progressive laws in the nation. The introduction of Sexual Health Victoria's telehealth medical abortion service means more women across the state will have access to safe and stigma-free abortion options," Thomas said.

SHV's telehealth service aligns with the organisation's core values of providing equitable healthcare to all. By removing systemic barriers to medical abortion, SHV aims to improve the health and well-being of Victorians, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive healthcare system.

For more information about Sexual Health Victoria, visit shvic.org.au.

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About Sexual Health Victoria:

Sexual Health Victoria has been a leading provider of reproductive and sexual health care, education, and advocacy for over 50 years. Governed by a voluntary board of directors, it remains an independent, not-for-profit, all-choice organisation dedicated to improving reproductive and sexual health and wellbeing for everyone in Victoria and beyond.