

New online directory to improve abortion access in Western Australia

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1800 4 Choice has developed a new interactive map to connect people experiencing unplanned pregnancy with pro-choice abortion service providers in their area.

The [map](#) is also a useful tool for service providers looking to connect with people who may be unaware of their services.

The [1800 4 Choice](#) helpline was launched in March of this year by Western Australia's largest non-government provider of sexual and reproductive health services, Sexual Health Quarters (SHQ).

SHQ CEO, Debra Barnes, said the new directory will complement the existing helpline service and break down additional barriers to abortion care.

"From today, Western Australians will be able to find an abortion provider through the interactive map located on the 1800 4 Choice website.

"With only a few clicks a person can quickly find information about pro-choice service providers in their area, including medical and surgical abortion services, unplanned pregnancy counselling, pharmacists dispensing abortion medication, as well as pathology and imaging services.

"In addition, site visitors can also filter services based on gestation limit, accessibility, fees, languages spoken and more.

"Those in need of additional information and support can continue to call the 1800 4 Choice helpline staffed by our experienced team of nurses."

This will eliminate the frequent need for individuals to make multiple phone calls and visit different providers to confirm if they offer abortion services. This time-consuming and often distressing process can negatively impact mental health and cause unnecessary delays in accessing essential care. SHQ Medical Director, Dr Samantha Johnson, said the improved transparency and accessibility provided by the 1800 4 Choice map and helpline will lead to improved access to early abortion care.

"Early abortions are cheaper, safer, and require less medical attention and follow-up than later abortions.

"Not everyone who can have an early medical abortion will choose that option, but it is important that they have a choice in the kind of procedure they undertake.

"A person seeking a medical abortion can access the procedure via telehealth and take the medication at home, making it significantly more accessible than surgical abortion, particularly for those in rural and regional areas."

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The passing of Abortion Legislation Reform Bill in 2023 removed many barriers to abortion in WA, but the lack of available information about abortion services continues to prevent timely access to care for many people experiencing unplanned pregnancy.

SHQ is committed to improving access to sexual and reproductive healthcare. Debra added, “as a passionate advocate for sexual and reproductive rights and a leading provider of clinical education and capacity building projects, we are also excited to utilise the map to identify areas of unmet need.

“The interactive map, alongside the website and helpline will improve SHQ’s ability to advocate for increased and improved services for people experiencing unplanned pregnancy in regions experiencing greater access barriers, as well for the sexual and reproductive rights of all Western Australians facing barriers. We will also be able to provide targeted resources to communities in need and offer professional development opportunities to improve the capacity of health professionals in those areas.

“Over the past 52 years, we have built a strong network of health and community organisations across the state and are grateful for their support in getting the word out on this vital project.”

SHQ invites providers of abortion care to register their services on the map to enhance visibility and accessibility. Debra said “As the healthcare sector evolves and the demand for accessible and efficient services grows, it is important to adapt to these changes. By registering, providers can reach a broader audience, including those who are more tech-savvy, and show their commitment to utilising new technology to improve access and patient care.

Abortion care providers, including pharmacists dispensing medical abortion pills, will have the opportunity to be publicly listed on the website’s mapping feature, or feature on a private list accessible only to those working on the helpline. Interested parties can fill out a simple form on the 1800 4 Choice website. Once confirmed that they meet the criteria to be included, they will be listed on the nominated mapping interface.

Registration is free and can be completed in under 5 minutes.

Register now: registration.map.4choice.org.au

Debra and Samantha are available for further comment.