



Better Renal Services Steering Committee

Meeting 1 Communique

26 September 2023

Introduction

The Department of Health and Aged Care and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) have established the Better Renal Services for First Nations Peoples Steering Committee (the Committee) to provide advice on the implementation of the Better Renal Services for First Nations Peoples Measure (the Measure). Under the Measure, the Government has invested \$73.2 million to provide funding for up to 30 four-chair dialysis units, including workforce accommodation where required, to provide life-saving health care to First Nations Australians with end-stage kidney disease.

The initial role of the Committee is to recommend to the Minister for Health and Aged Care appropriate sites for the renal dialysis units and workforce accommodation as part of the implementation of the Measure.

The Committee will also provide advice on a range of issues related to renal dialysis including any changes necessary to ensure sustainability of the delivery of renal services in remote and regional locations, and other strategic issues affecting the delivering of renal services in the sector, such as matters related to accommodation, workforce, and service delivery.

Summary of discussion

The Co-Chair provided an Acknowledgement of Country and welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Better Renal Services Steering Committee. An overview of the Measure and the role of the Committee was provided.

The Co-Chair advised that an independent probity advisor will be onboarded to provide advice to the Committee and support members to manage any real or perceived conflicts of interest in a way that supports genuine partnership with the Aboriginal community controlled sector. Furthermore, a probity advisor will provide assurance to the Commonwealth that recommendations made by the Committee have been made in a manner that is fair, equitable and defensible.

An update was provided on the progress of the first six locations to receive a dialysis unit:

- South Australia – Yalata and Coober Pedy;
- Western Australia – Balgo; and
- Northern Territory – Ti Tree, Atitjere (Harts Range)

Proposed methodology and criteria to assist with recommendations for future sites was presented to the Committee for comment. This included a work in progress Excel

spreadsheet outlining potential sites for consideration. The spreadsheet included a variety of data to help assess the requirement for additional dialysis services across various locations. Work is continuing to seek additional data to support recommendations.

A paper presenting opportunities for future reform regarding improving access to dialysis treatments in remote areas was provided to the Committee for information. Areas may include, but are not limited to, workforce, Medicare reform, community readiness, and options to establish peritoneal dialysis centres. The Committee was provided an overview of the paper and invited to comment on considerations for a Forward Work Program for the Committee.

Outcomes

- Members were provided an overview of the role of the Committee and were given the opportunity to introduce themselves and ask questions.
- Members reviewed the Terms of Reference and had the opportunity to raise any concerns.
- Members noted an independent probity advisor will be onboarded.
- Members were updated on the status of the Measure and the first six dialysis sites.
- Members considered and discussed methodology and criteria for recommendation of further dialysis sites.
- Members considered and discussed ideas to inform a Forward Work Program.

Next Meeting

The second meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday 4 December 2023.