



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health and Aged Care**

**NACCHO**



National Aboriginal Community  
Controlled Health Organisation

## **Rheumatic Fever Strategy (RFS) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)**

**Meeting 5 June 2023**

### **Communiqué**

#### **Summary**

The Rheumatic Fever Strategy (RFS) Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) held its Fifth meeting on June 5, 2023, chaired by Dr. Dawn Casey from the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and Mr. Ben Mudaliar from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC).

The meeting covered topics including: a proposal to include ARF and RHD on the National Notifiable Disease List (NNDL), revising the current committee workplan, endorsing previous meeting documents, general committee business, and current research initiatives on Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF) and Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD). Committee members also provided updates on recent developments in their jurisdictions/organisations.

#### **Highlights**

NACCHO sought Committee input on their application to include RHD with an existing application for ARF, for listing on the NNDL. If recommended for listing states and territories would follow a consistent protocol for reporting ARF and RHD to the Commonwealth. At this time, each jurisdiction has different requirements and do not submit notification numbers to the Commonwealth. Such inclusion would enable better surveillance of incidences of ARF and overall RHD prevalence. Committee participants are currently reviewing the proposal and providing comments. The Committee will then refer the paper to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Protection sub-committee, with the intention for the sub-committee to submit the proposal to the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CNDA).

The Committee were presented with a revised workplan, developed to strengthen the collective response to ARF and RHD. The revised plan puts more of a focus on improving patient outcomes, raising awareness, and improving access to equitable treatment and prevention services. The Committee is currently considering the revision and will meet in August to discuss.

The Committee noted a paper by the Telethon Kids Institute (TKI) which provided a snapshot summary of major research projects being conducted in Australia and internationally on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of Strep A infection, ARF and RHD. The paper was included on the agenda to keep JAC members informed of research developments.

#### **Next steps**

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held in XXXX 2023. For further information, please contact the RFS JAC Secretariat via: [RFS@health.gov.au](mailto:RFS@health.gov.au).