



Australian Government

Department of Health

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services Data Advisory Group Communique #6 June 2022

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Services Data Advisory Group (HS DAG) Communique keeps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care services up to date about outcomes regarding the National Key Performance Indicator (nKPI) and Online Services Report (OSR) data collections. This Communique also provides information about the work of the group more broadly regarding Indigenous health data. This is the sixth HS DAG Communique. Previous Communiques can be found on the [HS DAG website](#).

On 15 March 2022, the HS DAG met face-to-face and via teleconference as non-essential travel is discouraged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you would like to submit an item for consideration by the HS DAG, please send your submission using a [submission template](#) to the HS DAG Secretariat at: [hs.data.advisory.group@health.gov.au](mailto:hs.data.advisory.group@health.gov.au). All submissions will be reviewed for inclusion by the co-chairs for appropriateness.

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### Out of session items

#### Revised governance arrangements for the nKPI data collection

As of 6 October 2021, the relevant Department of Health Deputy Secretary is confirmed as the decision-maker for material changes to the nKPI data collection. The First Assistant Secretary for Indigenous Health Division is the decision-maker, based on HS DAG recommendations, for all minor modifications and deletions of existing nKPIs, to keep them aligned with clinical best practice.

Previously, the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Committee (AHMAC) had oversight of any major modifications to existing nKPIs, or addition or removal of indicators. AHMAC was formally disbanded following the August 2020 *Review of AHMAC Governance Arrangements* (the Walsh Review). The Walsh Review recommended a more streamlined structure to align with a new Federal Relations Architecture.

Under the new Federal Relations Architecture, AHMAC is replaced by the Health Chief Executives Forum (HCEF), which is comprised of the Health Chief Executives from all jurisdictions. The HCEF will engage on Indigenous health as needed.

#### Process for regular review of the nKPI collection

A process for reviewing and maintaining the nKPIs to ensure the ongoing relevance and utility of the collection was endorsed by the HS DAG out of session in September 2021.

This process will allow for a 5-yearly formal review cycle, making the management of the nKPI collection more transparent, systematic and efficient. It will ensure the nKPI collection remains relevant and useful into the future.

## **Outcomes of 15 March 2022 meeting**

### **The OSR and nKPI Data Framework**

The *OSR and nKPI for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Data Framework* articulates the roles and responsibilities of participants in the collection, use, access, privacy and security of the nKPI and OSR data. A public consultation process for revision of the October 2015 Framework was open from 3 May to 14 June 2021 on the Department's online [Consultation Hub](#). A total of 15 responses were received from Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, a Sector Support Organisation and a Local Health Network.

The HS DAG agreed that the final Framework document is appropriate as an internal Department of Health document, outlining how these data may be accessed and used.

### **Activity Work Plan / Performance Report move to Health Data Portal**

The HS DAG was advised that work is underway to move the Activity Work Plan, the associated Risk Plan and the Performance Report for comprehensive primary healthcare under the Indigenous Australians' Health Programme to online submission through the Health Data Portal. Health services currently submit these annual reports in the Word document format. The aim of this move online is to make the process simpler and more streamlined for both health services and the Department, reducing reporting burden for health services.

Online reporting will be implemented in a staged approach over the next 3 years. The Performance Report will be the first to be completed through the Health Data Portal, in September/October 2022. The Activity Work Plan and Risk Plan will be added in 2023. Indigenous Health Division is consulting with health services and the Department of Social Services Funding Agreement Managers to co-design the online reporting.

### **Update on development of 2 new nKPIs: STI and ear health**

In August 2021, via an out of session process, the HS DAG endorsed development of 2 new nKPIs for piloting – a sexually transmitted infections (STI) indicator and an ear health indicator. The pilots will be conducted for 2 reporting periods on an opt-out basis for health services. Data from the pilot periods will be analysed in consultation with AIHW and HS DAG members to reach agreement on final recommendations regarding whether to roll out the new indicators to all reporting health services.

The HS DAG were advised that the STI nKPI pilot will commence from the July 2021 reporting round. It will measure the number and proportion of Indigenous regular clients aged 15 to 34 years who were tested for chlamydia and/or gonorrhoea within the previous 12 months.

The ear health nKPI will measure the number and proportion of Indigenous regular clients aged 0-14 years who had a specified ear health check in the previous 12 months.

An ear check will be categorised as a check of the appearance of their eardrum and a check of the compliance or mobility of the eardrum (tympanic membrane).

The development of the ear check nKPI is delayed. The Department will work with the major clinical information system vendors to build an ear check module in their systems that will allow results to be extracted only from appropriate fields. This is a significant amount of work requiring core system changes.

### **January 2020 nKPI reporting round**

An update was provided to the HS DAG regarding the nKPI reporting period that opened on 1 January 2021 and was finalised on 25 March 2022. Reporting was mandatory. All health services that were required to report did complete their reporting. This highlights the value health services place on reporting nKPIs and is an indication of the reduced reporting burden that has been achieved.

### **Extension of the term of the HS DAG**

The HS DAG discussed the future of the Group. The HS DAG Terms of Reference state that meetings will be held up to June 2022, when continuation of the Group will be assessed through a review process. The Department is extending the HS DAG to June 2024, and is considering expanding its scope and functions to include mainstream primary health care data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **Next meeting**

The next HS DAG meeting is scheduled for 1 August 2022.