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Doctors welcome war on sexual diseases

AMA Queensland today welcomed a \$15.8 million strategy targeting sexually transmitted infections in north Queensland, as outlined today in Treasurer Curtis Pitt's second State Budget.

AMA Queensland President Dr Chris Zappala said while the figure is only a small part of the record \$15.3 billion health budget, it would be a life-saving measure.

"Sexually transmitted infections (STI) are at epidemic levels in north Queensland, which is unacceptable because most of these diseases are preventable and treatable," Dr Zappala said.

"This strategy will go a long way to fixing the problem."

Dr Zappala also welcomed a \$6 million measure to help combat the ice epidemic by providing specialist teams in Logan, Rockhampton and Townsville hospital emergency departments.

"Ice is a scourge and ruins lives," he said. "These teams will work on the front line of treatment and prevention."

"It's great news too that clinical genomics research will receive \$25 million to expedite genetic testing and counselling for patients, no matter where they live in Queensland."

Dr Zappala said \$230 million allocated over five years to modernise and streamline Queensland Health's IT systems will bring positive flow on effects for patients and lead to better integration with GP care.

"However, it's a shame the health tsunami that is obesity was overlooked in this Budget," he said.

"The only way we're going to tackle what has become a generational tragedy is by working together."

"The simple fact is that obesity is a huge impost on our lifestyles and our health system, and it will take a whole-of-government effort to stop this deadly trend."

Obesity was estimated to cause 5.4 per cent of hospital expenditure and indirectly cause 3,200 deaths in Queensland in 2010.

By 2020, an estimated 1.5 million Queenslanders will be obeseⁱ.

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ⁱ [Chief Health Officer's 'Health of Queenslanders' 2014 report](#)