

17 September 2012

SOUTH EASTERN SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO *CHECK IT OUT* FOR SEXUAL HEALTH WEEK 2012

Since 2006, Chlamydia infections in NSW have risen from 12,015 to 20,469 in 2011, with approximately 60% of Chlamydia infections last year occurring in the 15 – 25 age range.

As part of Sexual Health Week (17 to 23 September) this year, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) are encouraging young people to check out their sexual health and get tested for sexually transmissible infections (STIs), in particular Chlamydia.

Recent figures from SESLHD's Public Health Unit show that rates for Chlamydia continue to rise by an average of 15% per year among 16 – 25 year olds in the South Eastern Sydney region.

From 2008 to 2011, Chlamydia notifications in Sydney's Eastern and South Eastern suburbs (which include: Botany Bay, Randwick, Sydney, Waverley and Woollahra Local Government Areas) have increased by 34% in males and 30% in females.

Dr Anna McNulty, Director of Sydney Sexual Health Centre, said these increases are due in part to additional testing; however, they also indicate increased numbers of infection.

"Many people who have an STI do not have any obvious symptoms or signs, particularly with Chlamydia, which often has no symptoms.

"Chlamydia is easy to test for with a urine test and, like many STIs, is easily treated with a simple dose of antibiotics. But it is better to have never had it at all. Chlamydia is easily prevented by using condoms," Dr McNulty said.

"It is very important young people get the facts about their sexual health and make informed decisions on how to avoid infection, understand the risks if left untreated, and know what to do if they think they or their partner may have an STI.

"We encourage young people who are sexually active to use condoms and to see their GP, local sexual health clinic or youth health service to check out their sexual health and regularly test for STIs, in particular Chlamydia," she said.

To engage with young people during Sexual Health Week, a number of community grants by SESLHD have been made to organisations to run events and activities that focus on increasing the awareness of STIs, in particular Chlamydia, and the importance of getting tested.

Events include:

- 17-21 September: Safety and Wellness Expo at University of New South Wales – includes live music, demonstrations, Chlamydia awareness quiz, stalls, workshops and free giveaways including safe sex packs.
- 19 September: Creative Youth Initiative, Surry Hills - includes: workshops, art activity with sexual health theme, portable mural creation activity and music video making.
- 19 September: Launch of Sexual Health Week 2012 and activities at PCYC City of Sydney, Woolloomooloo - includes: sexual health awareness workshop with Q and As, prizes, games and

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District
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sexual health awareness training sessions for youth workers.

- 10 October: St George Youth Services who will be hosting a 'Check It Out' campaign for females aged 16 – 18, which will comprise of guest speakers, information sessions and creative activities around the theme of sexual health and getting tested for STIs and Chlamydia.

For confidential and free sexual health information including where to get a sexual health check-up, contact:

- NSW Sexual Health Information Line (SHIL) 1800 451 624 or
- Family Planning NSW Health line on 1300 658 886

Sexual Health Week 2012 is a partnership across NSW Health Districts, as well as Family Planning NSW and Y Foundations NSW.