

24 November, 2015

Ending HIV - Test Often, Treat Early and Prevent World AIDS Day 2015

NSW has made significant progress in increasing HIV testing, treatment uptake among people with diagnosed HIV and strengthening prevention efforts, although it is estimated that around 14 per cent of people with HIV are undiagnosed.

World AIDS Day, on 1 December, provides an important opportunity for us to remember those who have lost their lives to HIV and AIDS and to show support for people living with HIV.

To further promote awareness about HIV and AIDS, AIDS Awareness Week, 24–30 November, will focus on promoting HIV testing. More people are testing and accessing support services than ever before, but there's still more work to be done to ensure timely diagnoses and enable access to early treatment uptake, highlighting the need for people to test and test more often.

Colette McGrath, Manager of SESLHD's HIV/AIDS and Related Programs (HARP) Unit, said HIV testing is easier and more accessible than ever before. HIV can affect people of all ages, genders, races, and cultures.

"The most effective way for people to protect themselves and their partners is to consistently use condoms with sexual partners and have regular HIV and STI testing," Ms McGrath said.

"HIV testing leads to early detection and allows early uptake of treatment, which improves individual health and prevents transmission to others."

Early treatment is a key to an effective response to HIV. Most people receiving treatment in Australia have a similar life expectancy to people without HIV. In NSW, over 90% of people with HIV attending public HIV and sexual health clinics are now on treatment.

World AIDS Day is an opportunity to address the HIV-related stigma that still persists in Australia, undermining prevention, testing and treatment efforts and causing social isolation for many people living with HIV.

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SESLHD will be supporting the following local events for World AIDS Day within the inner-Sydney and Eastern suburbs, to increase community awareness about HIV prevention testing as well as support for those living with HIV:

- **Monday 30 November from 6.30pm:** Film screening of 'Transmission: The journey from AIDS to HIV', plus Q&A with producer Daniel Brace, cast and community members. Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre. Bookings: Pip Ditzell, 9265 9333.
- **Monday 30 November from 7pm:** Film screening of 'Gayby Baby', followed by panel discussion. Ritz Cinema Randwick. Bookings: Frida Kitas, 9399 0972.
- **Tuesday 1 December from 7am to 2pm:** A World AIDS Day information stall will be held in the High Street entrance to Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick.
- **Tuesday 1 December:** A MAC Cosmetics representative will be at the Sydney Children's Hospital to give free makeovers for patients/visitors, plus World AIDS Day information.
- **Tuesday 1 December from 8am to 3pm:** Sydney Sexual Health Centre will host an information stall, with red ribbons and giveaways at Sydney-Sydney Eye Hospital (near the pig statue), Macquarie St.
- **Tuesday 1 December from 9am to 12noon:** The Langton Centre at Surry Hills will host a morning tea. Staff will also be available to discuss HIV information plus offer a special blood screening clinic which will be open to all.
- **Tuesday 1 December from 8am to 2pm:** Staff from the Albion Centre and Ankali at Surry Hills will host an information stall, as well as take a stroll down Crown St to collect donations for World AIDS Day.
- **Tuesday 1 December from 11am to 3pm:** The Medically Supervised Injecting Centre at Kings Cross will offer a fun panel game for clients.

For information on World AIDS Day, visit: www.worldaidsday.org.au

For information on HIV and HIV testing, visit:

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/HIV_AIDS.aspx

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