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SESLHD HIV TESTING WEEK 2017 TARGETS CHINESE COMMUNITY

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District's annual HIV Testing Week (1 – 7 June 2017), will this year focus on increasing awareness of HIV testing and safe sex practices amongst people from a Chinese background, in particular those living in the St George region.

The majority of newly arrived migrants who settle in the South Eastern and Southern region of Sydney are aged 18-35 years and come largely from China, with 65 per cent of new migrants settling in the St George region.

In 2013, 191 new HIV diagnoses were reported among people born in Asia which accounted for 15.5 per cent of the total new HIV diagnosis (1,236) in Australia - the highest number of new diagnosis among people born overseas.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities are identified as one of the priority populations in the *NSW HIV Strategy 2016-2020* (Strategy). CALD communities are more likely to receive a late HIV diagnosis, have poorer knowledge of HIV and related services and show apprehension in receiving test results.

Dr Josephine Lusk, Director, Short Street Sexual Health Clinic at St George Hospital, said HIV testing was easier and faster than ever with high quality, safe and innovative HIV testing services.

“With almost 10,000 people in NSW living with HIV infection, HIV testing and diagnosis is vital, because HIV is often transmitted by people who don't know they have the virus. The outcomes for people with HIV are better if they are diagnosed early and get on treatment early.

“During HIV Testing Week, we are encouraging members of the community to help work towards the Strategy goal of ending HIV transmission by 2020, by getting tested. We need people to test regularly so they can receive early treatment and also prevent transmission of HIV to others”, Dr Lusk said.

SESLHD provided a community grant to 3 Bridges Community, Penshurst, to produce resources to promote the benefits of HIV prevention, testing and treatments and reduce stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS in the Chinese community.

Additionally, 12 'HIV Cultural Ambassadors' - 12 people who live locally with a Chinese background and trained in HIV testing – have been recruited to ensure the accuracy of the designs and messages of the resources developed.

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

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This partnership produced three posters and referral cards with three different key messages in Mandarin.

To coincide with HIV Testing Week, the resources will be widely distributed to venues frequented by the Chinese community in the St George region including: GPs, Chinese supermarkets, Chinese community services and organisations.

“The posters and cards have been created specifically for the local Chinese population in the St George region, incorporating language, images and themes, such as socio-cultural barriers of HIV and HIV testing as stigma and discrimination.

“As with the efforts of HIV Testing Week, these resources aim to raise awareness and significantly reduce HIV transmission by promoting the benefits of HIV prevention, testing and treatments, and reducing stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS in the Chinese community,” Dr Lusk said.

HIV testing is available via a local GP or health service. To find out where to get tested go to: www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/pages/sexual-health-clinics.aspx

For more information on HIV testing, treatment and prevention go to www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv/Pages/default.aspx or call the NSW Sexual Health Infolink 1800 451 624 www.shil.nsw.gov.au

For information on Dry Blood Spot self-sampling test go to: <https://www.hivtest.health.nsw.gov.au/>

For more information on HIV data in NSW in 2016 go to: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv/Documents/q4-2016-annual-hiv-data-report.pdf>