

31 May 2018

## Help end HIV transmission by 2020 – Get a test

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) is encouraging people to get tested during *HIV Testing Week* to help reach the goal of ending HIV transmission across the State by 2020.

HIV testing is now fast and easy with a variety of free and confidential services, including the NSW dried blood spot (DBS) self-testing service that can be completed from the comfort of your own home.

In 2017-18, the NSW Ministry of Health is investing \$22.4 million in services to strengthen HIV testing, treatment and prevention across the State. *HIV Testing Week* runs from 1-7 June.

ISLHD Sexual Health Service Director, Associate Professor Katherine Brown said it's important people get tested so they know their HIV status.

"Knowing your HIV status is a good thing. It means people with HIV can start treatment earlier which not only has better health outcomes, but can also help prevent it being passed on to others," Associate Professor Brown said.

"We are making good progress towards ending HIV transmission in NSW by 2020.

"Last year alone across NSW there was a 19 per cent reduction in the number of men who have sex with men diagnosed with HIV, compared to the average of the past six years.

"The fall in HIV notifications in this category shows that more testing, high treatment, condom use, and the addition of the new HIV prevention treatment PrEP, are very effective."

However, Associate Professor Brown said there is still work to do.

"In 2017, 67 people across NSW were diagnosed with HIV through heterosexual sex. This is a 29 per cent rise compared to the previous six year average," she said.

"Last year, one in five people diagnosed with HIV in NSW acquired their infection through heterosexual sex."

NSW Health is committed to dramatically driving down the number of new infections by increasing testing, treatment and safe sex practices.

### Who should get tested for HIV?

During *HIV Testing Week* (1-7 June) ISLHD is encouraging heterosexual people, particularly those who've never been tested before, to get a HIV test. This includes people:

- Who've had sex when traveling in a country where HIV is common
- Had sex with someone from a country where HIV is common

---

### Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

**Media contact: Media and Corporate Communications Unit**

Phone: 4221 6862 or 0477 391 219 | Afterhours: 0422 003 764 | website: [www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au)

**healthdirect** AUSTRALIA – providing expert health advice 24 hours a day to NSW residents – Tel. 1800 022 222

- Who come from a country where HIV is common
- Who've used injecting equipment after someone else
- NSW Health continues to encourage men who have sex with men to get tested.

**Where to get tested?**

People can get tested at their local GP or Illawarra Sexual Health Service 4223 8457.

People can also use the new [Dried Blood Spot testing](#) service – a free, easy, private and accurate way to test for HIV and hepatitis C at home. To order a test go to: [www.hivtest.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hivtest.health.nsw.gov.au)

To find out where to go to get tested go to or call the [NSW Sexual Health Infolink](#) 1800 451 624

Prevention is still essential and condoms are considered the best way to prevent HIV and STIs.

For more information about prevention, including PrEP go to: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv)

**Media note:** Associate Professor Katherine Brown is available to be interviewed on Thursday 31 May or Friday 1 June 2018.