

November 28, 2013

World AIDS Day 2013 – ‘Getting to Zero’

Experts from South West Sydney Local Health District are urging communities to band together to support this year’s World AIDS Day theme of ‘Getting to Zero: zero new HIV infections; zero discrimination; zero AIDS related deaths.’

On World AIDS Day, December 1, people in Liverpool are being asked to show their support for those living with HIV, by wearing a red ribbon.

In 2012 there was a 24 per cent rise in HIV infections in NSW, and experts say the focus for the year ahead is on turning the figures into a downward trend by increasing testing, as well as awareness of the illness.

South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWS LHD) Head of HIV Medicine, Associate Professor John Quin said since the first HIV diagnosis in Australia more than three decades ago, advances in treatment options have brought important improvements for those living with the illness.

“HIV can affect people of all ages, genders, races and cultures. World AIDS Day provides an important opportunity to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS,” A/Professor Quin said.

A/Professor Quin said due to improved treatments, people living with HIV are now living longer and healthier lives, but there is still no cure for HIV.

“The most effective way for people to protect themselves and their partners in reducing the spread of HIV is to consistently use a condom with sexual partners and have regular HIV and STI testing,” he said.

“An important benefit of getting tested is early diagnosis, which enables early treatment. Antiretroviral treatment not only improves health and wellbeing but also reduces the risk of spreading HIV to others.

“To overcome HIV we need the support of the whole community. Not only do we need to combat HIV itself, but also cultural factors like stigma and discrimination in the workplace, in health care settings, schools, families and communities,” A/Professor Quin said.

As part of World AIDS Day, community groups and organisations are holding events to increase community awareness about HIV, and to highlight HIV related stigma and discrimination. For information on World AIDS Day go to www.worldaidsday.org.au

Liverpool Hospital

On Friday, November 29 a free World AIDS Day BBQ will be held at Liverpool Hospital main entrance - answer a quiz question to receive a free sausage sizzle and drink.