

27 March 2014

Caddy Shack visits during National Youth Week

Health experts are encouraging young people who are sexually active to *Share Affection not Infection* during National Youth Week 2014 and get tested for sexually transmissible infections (STIs), in particular Chlamydia.

A mobile STI testing unit dubbed The Caddy Shack will visit various youth week events across SWSLHD to help improve awareness of early intervention, screening and treatment for Chlamydia.

Ms Voula Kougelos District Manager for Youth Health Services SWSLHD said that the project aims not only to raise awareness of sexual health amongst young people but also to increase STI screening and treatment rates.

“Rates of infection have increased dramatically over the last ten years across NSW,” Ms Kougelos said.

“People may have Chlamydia without even knowing it as they often don’t experience any symptoms.

“However they can still pass it on, which is why it is important for anyone who has had unprotected sex to get tested for Chlamydia.

“The test is painless – normally just a urine sample and the treatment is a course of antibiotics - which is why this mobile screening unit is so fantastic. Young people (16 years and over) can be tested on-site at the events by simply providing a urine sample to nursing staff.

“Screening is confidential and young people with negative test results will be notified of via SMS within a week after testing. Young people who test positive for Chlamydia will be contacted by clinic staff for follow up and treatment.

“Nursing staff will facilitate screening and take samples to pathology for testing.

“Undiagnosed Chlamydia can lead to a number of complications including infertility, ectopic pregnancy and chronic pelvic pain in women and recurrent urethritis in men,” she said.

Ms Kougelos also said that the project - which is a collaboration between SWSLHD Youth Health Services, HARP Unit and Sexual Health Services – is an important part of increasing awareness of local youth health services and sexual health services available in south western Sydney.

“Young people are a significant portion of our community and it’s essential they have access to a safe, sensitive and confidential environment to discuss any health concerns they may have,” said Ms Kougelos.

“Our services aim to support young people in areas such as mental and sexual health, drug and alcohol use, domestic violence, social isolation, physical activity and nutrition,” she said.

National Youth Week will be held from 4 -13 April 2014 and celebrates the value of all young Australians to their communities; this year’s theme is “Our voice. Our impact.”

The Caddy Shack will be on site at the Young Heroes Festival held by Bankstown Council at Paul Keating Park Bankstown on Wednesday 12 April 2014.

The Corner Youth Health Service is also holding an event during National Youth Week at Roundabout Youth Centre, Chester Hill on Thursday 10th April 2014. This event will focus on promoting the Corner Youth Health Service and will offer young people the opportunity to explore issues around drug and alcohol use in a fun and interactive night of activity.

For more information please contact CYHS on 02 9796 8633.