

25 November 2015

A vow to end HIV on World Aids Day

This World AIDS Day, on 1 December, South Western Sydney Local Health District will take the opportunity to further raise awareness in the community, remember those who have lost their lives to AIDS and show support for people living with HIV.

NSW has made progress in the areas of HIV testing, treatment uptake and prevention. However Liverpool Hospital's Clinical Immunology and HIV Medicine director Dr Louise Evans said an estimated 14 percent of people with HIV remain undiagnosed.

"AIDS Awareness Week, 24-30 November, will focus on promoting HIV testing that can lead to early detection and early uptake of treatment. Early detection and treatment has health benefits both for the individual and community," Dr Evans said.

"We're looking forward to using World AIDS Day to raise awareness about HIV and the value of testing and treatment and to discuss available prevention strategies," she said.

Improved treatments now allow people with HIV to live long and healthy lives. New HIV treatments also greatly reduce the chance of passing the virus to others. Getting tested and starting treatment early protects your own health and protects your partner.

To kick start conversation, staff from the local HIV & Related Programs Health Promotion team will be handing out red ribbons and fresh strawberries at the Macarthur Square markets on Sunday 29 November from 10am and holding a lunchtime BBQ from 11am outside Liverpool Hospital on Tuesday 1 December. Bankstown Water Tower will be sure to get people talking when it is lit up red from 8pm on the night.

Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation, in partnership with Campbelltown Council and SWSLHD will be holding a schools-based touch football competition on 2 December from 9am to increase HIV awareness in local young people. From 6pm The Corner Youth Health and Youth Off the Streets will help young people in Bankstown put their creative skills to use by painting a red ribbon-themed mural in Paul Keating Park.

People are getting tested more than ever before but there is still more work to be done. Early diagnosis will help people get the treatment they need. HIV can affect people of all ages, genders and cultures.

Free HIV and STI testing is available at Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic, phone 9827 8022. All GPs also provide HIV & STI testing.

You can call the NSW Sexual Health Infoline to ask any questions about sexual health: 1800 451 624

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