

4 April 2017

Young people take charge of their health

Youth Week (31 March – 9 April) celebrations have kicked off across the country and health experts are encouraging young people to take charge of their health.

South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Manager for Youth Health Services Voula Kougelos said she hopes this year's theme, *It starts with us*, encourages young people to be proactive about their health.

"Youth Week is a great opportunity for us to remind local young people that our service is here to support them in areas like mental and sexual health, drug and alcohol use, domestic violence, social isolation, physical activity and nutrition," Ms Kougelos said.

"This year in particular, we are focussing on increasing awareness of healthy relationships, consent and sexual health so we're really looking forward to Hump Day."

Hump Day, which falls on 5 April this year, aims to promote the importance of sexual health and STI prevention in a fun and positive way during Youth Week.

"Sexual health is an essential but sometimes overlooked part of being a healthy young person," Ms Kougelos said.

Young people aged 15 to 24, had the highest rates of STIs in NSW with over 12,000 Chlamydia notifications in 2014.

"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," Ms Kougelos said.

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

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.

"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,” Ms Kougelos said.

“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.”

The Caddy Shack 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.

Activities for Youth Week 2017 can be found on local Council websites or at:

www.youthweek.nsw.gov.au

Hump Day and Youth Week is a partnerships between NSW Health and Family and Community Services.

The Liverpool Sexual Health Clinic offers access to sexual health specialist doctors, nurses and counsellors. For more information or to access services please contact 9827 8022.

Youth Week events near you

Roundabout Youth Skate Party

Youth Health staff will be providing information and outreach at the Roundabout Youth Health Centre in Sefton.

Location: Roundabout Youth Centre, 104 Carlingford St, Sefton
Date: 6 April
Time: 6.00pm onwards

Liverpool Sports Day

Organised by Liverpool City Council, the event encourages physical activity and social inclusiveness. Youth Health staff will raising awareness of services available to young people and providing show bags to those attending.

Location: Edwin Wheeler Oval, Ashcroft
Date: 6 April
Time: 10am – 2pm

Bankstown Youth Fest

This annual festival is organised by Canterbury Bankstown Council. The Corner Youth Health Services will be raising awareness of services available to young people and running activities focussing on healthy relationships, consent and self-care.

Location: Paul Keating Park, Bankstown
Date: 8 April
Time: 12pm- 5pm

Fairfield Bring it On Festival

The Caddy Shack mobile testing unit will visit the festival to help improve awareness of early intervention, screening and treatment of Chlamydia. Young people aged 16 years and over are invited to participate. Safe sex packs will also be available for those interested. The Blood Battles team will also be there, promoting Hepatitis C awareness through their interactive game and comic book created by local young people.

Location: Fairfield Showground, Smithfield Road, Prairiewood
Date: 9 April
Time: 10.30am – 7.30pm