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## Ground-breaking research saves lives

The development of a new medicine to treat advanced prostate cancer and the use of medicinal cannabis for terminally ill patients are among more than 300 clinical trials in progress across south western Sydney.

The region is a major hub for medical research with more than 20 clinical trial groups covering over 15 specialty areas underway in the South Western Sydney Local Health District.

International Clinical Trials Day on 20 May offered an opportunity to highlight the important role of research within the region's hospitals, Professor Les Bokey, the District's Director of Research, said.

"Clinical trials help medical researchers determine if a treatment is safe, effective and better than existing treatment," Prof Bokey said.

"The trials cover speciality areas including cancer, cardiology, rheumatology, multiple sclerosis and gastroenterology and are aimed at improving treatment and saving lives.

"Research is usually linked to community needs and values to ensure our population has access to the best treatment in the years to come."

Professor Bokey said the District had a strong tradition in medical research.

He highlighted Professor Meera Agar's Australian-first medical cannabis trial for terminally ill patients, part of the NSW Government's \$21 million medicinal cannabis commitment, and Associate Professor Kieran Scott's world-first clinical trial of a new experimental medicine for prostate cancer treatment as examples of the District's ground-breaking research.

Associate Professor Scott's research is continuing at the highly specialised Phase 1 Clinical Trials Unit which officially opened last December at Liverpool Hospital.

The unit provides a permanent space to conduct phase 1 trials of cancer medications, ensuring the hospital's place as an important centre for cancer research.

The District and the Ingham Institute for Applied Medical Research are marking World Clinical Trials Day with activities including a morning tea to thank research staff for their hard work and dedication.

The Health Beyond Research & Innovation Showcase on 6 and 7 June at the William Inglis Hotel, Warwick Farm, presented by the District and the Institute, will include presentations on the research developments in the region.

International Clinical Trials Day is held on 20 May each year to commemorate the day James Lind began his trials into the cause of scurvy in 1747. Lind's trials found evidence of the link between citrus fruits and scurvy.

For more information on clinical trials in the region visit [clinicaltrials.org.au](http://clinicaltrials.org.au).

Information is also available in English, Arabic, Chinese, Samoan, Hindi and Vietnamese.