

29 July 2019

Treatment provides a cure to hepatitis C

South Western Sydney Local Health District is being creative to promote the message about hepatitis C as the nation nudges closer to eliminating it by 2028.

One local project has produced thousands of beer coasters with hepatitis C cure messages to distribute to local pubs and clubs.

Meanwhile, South Western Sydney Local Health District Community Hepatitis Clinical Nurse Consultant Katherine McQuillan spends her time supporting General Practitioners to cure their patients of hepatitis C.

“Every year, about 400 notifications of hepatitis C are made by doctors in south western Sydney. Chronic hepatitis C is a major cause of liver disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer,” Ms McQuillan said.

“The good news is, we now have medication that cures 95 per cent of hepatitis C patients within 12 weeks.”

Hepatitis C is transmitted by blood-to-blood contact including sharing injecting, tattooing or piercing equipment.

The hepatitis C tablets cost \$40 per script or \$7 for those who have a healthcare card.

“The old treatments came with serious side effects, and often failed,” she said.

“Now, in three months, with few or no side effects, you can be cured.”

NSW is moving closer to eliminating hepatitis C with more than 22,000 people across the state now cured of the virus.

“It is a simple blood test to detect hepatitis C, but you need to ask your GP,” Ms McQuillan said.

People born in high prevalence countries including Pakistan, Egypt and Asia, anyone who has been in jail, received unsterile tattooing, injected drugs, are children born to mothers with hepatitis C or had a blood transfusion before 1990, should be tested.

Talk to your doctor about hepatitis C, call the Hepatitis Infoline on 1800 803 990 or visit www.hep.org.au