HIV STRATEGY
2012-2015
A NEW ERA
CURRENT SITUATION

Current estimates are that around 10,500 people are living with diagnosed HIV infection in NSW. An estimated 10-20% of all people with HIV infection in NSW are undiagnosed and therefore do not know they are infected. In 2013 there were 357 new diagnoses of HIV, a decrease of 13% compared with the previous 12 months. Most infections reported were in gay and homosexually active men (78%) with heterosexual contact accounting for 17% and injecting drug use 3% of notifications.

AIDS-related deaths have fallen dramatically in NSW because of effective HIV treatment. International research shows that the lifespan of people living with HIV is now not much different from the average population life expectancy.

2013 HIV STATISTICS IN NSW

Proportion of 2013 notifications:

- **78%** among gay men
- **17%** among heterosexuals
- **2%** among Aboriginal people
- **3%** among injecting drug use

Research has shown that for every $1 invested in HIV prevention, the NSW Government has saved $13 dollars in clinical care costs.*
In 2013 HIV testing has increased both overall in NSW, and among high risk groups including MSM. An additional 27,218 HIV tests were done in NSW in 2013 overall compared with 2012. Testing leads to early diagnosis which enables early treatment and prevents transmission. Testing needs to target high risk populations. Action has been taken in 2013 to significantly improve access to and uptake of HIV testing services:

- Public awareness campaigns such as “pop-up” rapid HIV testing sites to encourage high risk groups to have a HIV test and test more often;
- Supporting health providers, especially GPs, to encourage HIV testing and to remove barriers to offering testing for high risk groups;
- Making HIV testing easier by providing a mixture of HIV testing options including Xpress clinics and Rapid HIV testing sites in clinical and community settings.

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NSW Health is strengthening the provision of HIV care for people with HIV and removing the barriers that limit patients’ access to treatment. Action has been taken in 2013 to significantly improve access to and uptake of services for HIV treatment:

- Providing comprehensive support to both doctors and patients at the critical time when an HIV diagnosis is made through the newly established NSW HIV Support Program
- Increasing the amount of HIV drugs that a patient can pick up from hospital pharmacies on each visit.
- Making home delivery of HIV drugs possible to improve treatment access for people with HIV who live in rural areas, or who are in full-time employment.
- Strengthening HIV care in general practices through education and training and establishing co-management with HIV specialists.

The NSW Government is committed to refocussing efforts to strengthen the safe sex culture in our communities and support behaviour that reduces risk of infection. Action has been taken in 2013 to improve the prevention of HIV transmission:

- Targeted awareness campaigns and peer support programs to strengthen condom use among gay men.
- Investments in new HIV prevention approaches including a demonstration project of HIV pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to gay men and heterosexual men and women at high risk of HIV infection in NSW.
- Provision of sterile injecting equipment for people who inject drugs through increasing the number and diversity of Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) outlets.
- A strong NSW Health HIV brand to unite partner organisations, at-risk communities, the medical community and the public behind the cause of “Ending HIV”. The brand was developed to leverage off the success of the ACON “Ending HIV” campaign and to ensure community messages and health messages worked in tandem.

At least 7887 people living with HIV in NSW are on antiretroviral treatment*. Treatment coverage among clients receiving HIV care at public sexual health clinics is high at approximately 90%.

*an underestimate as complete data from all pharmacies was not available in 2013.

Men who have sex with men
Among gay men with casual sexual partners surveyed, 64% reported practicing safe sex* (SGCPS 2013)

* always protected or avoided anal sex.

Sex Workers
Evidence show almost universal condom use and high levels of HIV testing. (Donovan et al 2012)

People Who Inject Drugs
In 2013 the number of NSP outlets across NSW increased by 5% and the number of units of injecting equipment distributed in NSW increased by 10% compared with 2012.

NSW Health will continue to actively monitor and report on HIV surveillance data in NSW, and will continue to make changes to programs and services that are necessary to strengthen our response to achieve the targets in the NSW HIV Strategy.
THE YEAR OF TESTING: 2013

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

Including increases in testing across all high risk groups.

There were around 450,000 HIV tests performed in NSW in 2013.

This is an increase of around 27,000 tests compared with 2012.

INNOVATIONS IN TESTING

19 rapid testing sites across NSW
(17 clinics + 2 shopfronts)

2x pop up testing sites

Results in 30 mins

Ad templates provided across LHD and health services

TESTING LEADS TO EARLY DIAGNOSIS WHICH ENABLES EARLY TREATMENT AND PREVENTS TRANSMISSION

www.health.nsw.gov.au

Suggested Citation: NSW Ministry of Health, Snapshot of HIV Strategy, March 2014.