Objective
To work towards the virtual elimination of HIV transmission in NSW by 2020.

Summary
NSW has a strong track record of achievement in preventing the spread of HIV. Across the state, AIDS-related deaths have fallen dramatically because of effective HIV treatment. International research shows that the lifespan of people living with HIV is now similar to the average population life expectancy.

Where we were
In the decade prior to 2012 HIV notifications were relatively stable in NSW. However in 2012 there was a concerning increase in HIV notifications. NSW released the *NSW HIV Strategy 2012-2015* on 1 December 2012 which refocussed efforts to dramatically drive down the number of new HIV infections by increasing testing, treatment and sustaining safe sex practices.
Increasing testing rates, and reducing the pool of undiagnosed HIV cases, is a key priority for NSW Health. Testing leads to early diagnosis, which enables early treatment. Antiretroviral treatment improves health outcomes for people with HIV, and also reduces transmission of HIV to others. This together with safe sex/prevention practices makes it possible to virtually eliminate HIV transmission in NSW by 2020.

A significant proportion of people infected with HIV are undiagnosed and do not know they are infected. This highlights the need for high levels of engagement with HIV testing.

Research has shown that for every $1 invested in HIV prevention, the NSW Government has saved $13 dollars in clinical care costs.

What has changed

In the past 18 months, the NSW HIV Strategy has delivered substantial positive impacts across NSW.

There is evidence of increased testing in high risk groups and initial data indicates that more people are being diagnosed earlier.

Progress on activities

Test more

Action has been taken to significantly ramp up HIV testing across NSW in priority populations. Public awareness campaigns and “pop-up” rapid HIV testing sites are encouraging high risk groups to test more often. More flexible services have also been introduced. Activity has also focused on encouraging health providers, especially GPs and sexual health clinics, to increase HIV testing.
Treat early
Significant improvements to the access and uptake of HIV treatment have been achieved. The NSW HIV Support Program, provides comprehensive support to both doctors and patients at the critical time when an HIV diagnosis is made.

Other initiatives to support treatment include:
- Increasing the amount of HIV drugs that a patient can pick up from hospital pharmacies on each visit
- Improving access by giving people with HIV the option for medications to be delivered to a person’s home or to a nearby community pharmacy.

More than 8773 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 88 per cent.

Prevent
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. A strong HIV brand was developed to unite partner organisations, at-risk communities, the medical community and the public behind the cause of “Ending HIV”.

Initiatives to support prevention of HIV transmission include:
- Targeted awareness campaigns and peer support programs to strengthen condom use among gay men
- Increased provision of sterile injecting equipment for people who inject drugs through the Needle and Syringe Program (NSP).

HIV testing has never been easier and more convenient
- Xpress clinics
- Drop in clinics and extended hours at busy Sexual Health Services
- Fast turnaround of results
- Rapid testing including “pop up” and community based testing sites

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

Increases in testing across all high risk groups

www.health.nsw.gov.au
Next steps

The Government will continue to actively monitor and report on HIV surveillance data in NSW, and will make changes to programs and services in order to strengthen its response to achieve the targets in the NSW HIV Strategy.

**Test**
Flexible testing approaches, community based social marketing campaigns, education for health professionals and clinical redesign will continue to help high risk groups access testing.

**Treat**
Work will focus on engaging with clinicians and the community to promote HIV treatment uptake and to support adherence.

There will be a particular focus on ensuring that those who are diagnosed with HIV have up to date information on both the personal health benefits of treatment and the impact that the treatment has on reducing the spread of HIV.

**Prevent**
Innovative prevention and health promotion programs will be used to reach at risk populations to strengthen prevention behaviours.

More information


For more information about NSW Health and Ending HIV visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv