



# Jillian Skinner MP

## Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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Monday, 17 December 2012

#### **MORE SUPPORT FOR PATIENTS: NEW RAPID TEST FOR HIV**

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today welcomed news that the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has approved new rapid screening tests for HIV to be available in Australia.

Mrs Skinner joined Federal Minister for Health Tanya Plibersek and Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Ageing Catherine King at the Albion Centre for the announcement today.

“The NSW Government funded research trials for rapid screening tests,” Mrs Skinner said.

“This is the first test to be licensed in Australia but it is currently not funded by the Commonwealth Government. The NSW Government and other stakeholders will be working with the Commonwealth to fast-track funding approval for these tests.

“The on-the-spot rapid testing produces preliminary results in just 30 minutes. The test – Alere Determine Combo HIV 1/2 AG/AB - will go a long way to ensuring patients can quickly assess their HIV status, receive treatment quicker and potentially curb infection rates.”

Earlier this month, Mrs Skinner launched a new HIV strategy for NSW which aims to drive down infection rates while making testing and treatment more accessible.

Key initiatives of the *NSW HIV Strategy 2012-2015: A New Era* include:

- Reducing sexual transmission of HIV among homosexual men by 60 per cent by 2015 (and 80 per cent by 2020);
- Decreasing rates of HIV infection in other populations such as Aboriginal people and heterosexuals by 50 per cent;
- Reducing the average time between infection and diagnosis from 4.5 years to 1.5 years;
- Increasing to 90 per cent the number of people with HIV who are on antiretroviral treatment.

“The Federal Minister committed to improving access to HIV testing and it is wonderful to be here today to see the first steps being made to make this commitment a reality.

“NSW really is entering a new era of HIV prevention which will encourage testing, treatment, support and community education to ensure support is available for patients, their family and carers,” Mrs Skinner said.

It is estimated there are between 2300 and 4800 people in NSW who have HIV but are unaware they have been infected.

“This important announcement today is another step toward ensuring individuals are diagnosed much earlier while also linking them with prevention, treatment and support services,” Mrs Skinner said.

Rapid testing is a preliminary screening test designed for community members that are at higher risk of HIV and need to be tested more regularly.

The test requires a prick to the finger for a blood sample which is transferred to a patient test card. These cards detect the presence of the HIV antigen and antibodies in the blood and the result is available within 20-30 minutes.

More information on the test can be found at [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au)

The *NSW HIV Strategy 2012-2015* can be viewed at:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publications/Pages/nsw-hiv-strategy-2012-15-a-new-era.aspx>