



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES \$1.5 MILLION FOR KIRBY INSTITUTE RESEARCH INTO HIV

Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research Jillian Skinner today announced the Kirby Institute will receive \$1.5 million over five years for research into HIV.

Mrs Skinner made the announcement while officially opening the Kirby Institute's purpose-built facility at the University of New South Wales' Kensington campus, towards which the NSW Government contributed \$20 million.

"The NSW Government has committed \$1.5 million over five years to the Kirby Institute to support the development of systems for ongoing and rigorous evaluation of the *NSW HIV Strategy 2012-2015*," Mrs Skinner said.

"I am pleased the University of New South Wales will match this funding with \$1.5 million over five years."

"This combined funding will support a partnership between the Government, academia, community and professional organisations to build structures to allow real-time monitoring of HIV testing, HIV treatment, safe sexual behaviour and targeted HIV prevention strategies," she said.

The Kirby Institute had been involved in nearly every major breakthrough in HIV research in Australia.

Last year, a landmark study by the Kirby Institute found a lower daily dose of HIV medication is safe and as effective in suppressing HIV as the standard recommended dose. This could mean millions more people gain access to life-saving HIV therapy. And in recent years, the Institute's expertise has been applied to ground-breaking research in viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections.

Mrs Skinner will tomorrow attend the Kirby Institute's Annual Symposium, which is a satellite event of the 20th International AIDS Conference to be held in Melbourne from July 20 to July 25.

The symposium will feature addresses from French Nobel laureate Professor Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, who co-discovered HIV as the cause of AIDS, as well as Australian Nobel laureate Peter Doherty. The Annual Surveillance Report on HIV & Annual Report of Trends in Behaviour will also be released at the symposium.

Mrs Skinner said she is proud of the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government's leadership in the fight against HIV and AIDS, which is shaped by the *NSW HIV Strategy 2012- 2015*.

The strategy aims to:

- Reduce sexual transmission of HIV among gay men by 60 per cent by 2015 and 80 per cent by 2020.
- Decrease rates of HIV infection in other populations, including injecting drug users, sex workers, Aboriginal people and heterosexuals.
- Reduce the time between infection and diagnosis for people with HIV to ensure early prevention education, access to treatment and reduce onward transmission.
- Increase access to antiretroviral treatment to improve health and reduce the number of AIDS-related deaths.
- Eliminate cases of mother-to-child HIV transmission.

"The prevalence of HIV in NSW is low by international standards, mainly because of excellent prevention programs and advances in treatments. However, these HIV infections continue to be a significant public health burden," Mrs Skinner said.

"The NSW Government is determined to drive down, and effectively eliminate, the spread of HIV and AIDS by 2020."

This week (July 14-20) is HIV Testing Week in NSW. A 'pop-up' rapid HIV testing bus will be parked on Taylor Square, Darlinghurst between 3pm and 6pm daily until Friday.

"HIV testing is easier than ever before," Mrs Skinner said.

"Rapid HIV testing is part of the new era in HIV testing in NSW. It is just of a mix of high quality, safe and innovative HIV testing services on offer, including express clinics, after hours and drop in clinics, faster results and online booking.

"Testing leads to early diagnosis, which enables early treatment, which benefits the individual and our community as a whole," she said.

For more information on HIV Testing Week, treatment and prevention go to <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv> or call 1800 451 624

The *NSW HIV Strategy 2012-2015* is available at: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/publications/Publications/nsw-hiv-strategy-2012-15.pdf>