



# Jillian Skinner MP

## Minister for Health

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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Thursday 28 May 2015

#### **NSW SUCCEEDING IN CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN HIV DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT**

Health Minister Jillian Skinner has welcomed a Kirby Institute study that confirms early treatment of HIV extends survival and prevents serious complications in people with HIV infection.

The Strategic Timing of AntiRetroviral Treatment (START) study, released today, found serious outcomes and deaths due to both AIDS and non-AIDS events - including major cardiovascular events, renal and liver disease and cancer - was reduced by more than 50 per cent among those in the early treatment group compared to those in the deferred treatment group.

As at 31 December 2014, more than 89 per cent of people living with HIV who attended public HIV and sexual health clinics were receiving antiretroviral treatment.

HIV testing has also continued to increase both overall in NSW and among high risk populations. In 2014, there were 465,584 HIV serology tests done in NSW.

Additionally, 76 per cent of gay men reported they have had a HIV test in the last 12 months, the highest figure since the NSW Health survey started in 1996.

“Today’s findings are further proof the NSW Government’s strategies to reduce the gap between HIV diagnosis and the commencement of antiretroviral treatment will lead to better health outcomes for people living with HIV,” Mrs Skinner said.

“I am also very proud the NSW Government has heralded a new era of HIV testing in NSW, making HIV testing easier and faster than ever before.

“By providing safe and innovative testing services - including rapid HIV testing, express clinics, after hours and drop-in clinics, faster results and online booking - we are delivering enormous benefits to individuals and the wider community.”

NSW’s fight against HIV and AIDS is shaped by the *NSW HIV Strategy 2012- 2015*, which aims to drive down, and effectively eliminate, the spread of HIV and AIDS by 2020.

This Saturday (May 30) marks the start of HIV Testing Week.

For information on HIV testing sites and advice on treatment and prevention, go to: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv) or call 1800 451 624.