



Jillian Skinner
Minister for Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW A WORLD LEADER IN FIGHT AGAINST HIV

NSW is set to lead the world in the fight against HIV after the launch today of the first clinical trial ever conducted with the aim of rapidly reducing the spread of HIV through the widespread use of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medication.

Health Minister Jillian Skinner launched NSW's EPIC (Expanded PrEP Implementation in Community) trial at Oxford Street's aTEST rapid HIV testing clinic.

The 1000th patient has now been enrolled in the NSW trial. Before the end of the year, it is expected to provide PrEP to 3,700 people at highest risk of HIV infection.

"The EPIC-NSW trial is a milestone in the state's ambitious aim to virtually eliminate HIV transmission by 2020 under the NSW HIV Strategy 2016-2020," Mrs Skinner said.

"PrEP is the next critical stage in our HIV response and will be a game changer for prevention in NSW. This is the first trial in Australia on this scale and one of the largest in the world to quickly reduce the spread of HIV."

PrEP is the use of antiretroviral drugs traditionally used to treat HIV infection, but are now also used to prevent the infection in those at high risk of the virus. Studies have shown PrEP is safe and very effective, offering up to 99 per cent protection for homosexually active men and 94 per cent protection for women, if taken every day.

The EPIC-NSW study is funded by NSW Health and led by Professor Andrew Grulich of the Kirby Institute at the University of NSW. Nine clinics have begun enrolling participants (Sydney Sexual Health Centre, Kirketon Road Centre, Short Street Clinic, Lismore Sexual Health Service, RPA Sexual Health Clinic, Clinic 16, Holdsworth House Private Practice, East Sydney Doctors Private Practice and Taylor Square Private Practice).

Up to 25 clinics across NSW will also enrol participants by the end of June.

Plans for the EPIC-NSW trial were announced on World AIDS Day, on December 1 last year, when the NSW HIV Strategy 2016-2020 was launched.

For information on EPIC-NSW contact the PrEP Info Service on [1800 451 624](tel:1800451624) or visit the EPIC-NSW Study website at epic-nswstudy.org.au