



Issue date
10 February 2023

Distributed to:

Chief Executives
Directors of Clinical Governance
Director, Regulation and Compliance Unit

Action required by:

Chief Executives
Directors of Clinical Governance

We recommend you also inform:

Directors, Managers and Staff of:

- Pharmacy Departments
- Emergency Departments
- Sexual Health Services

Expert Reference Group

Content reviewed by:

- STI Programs Unit, NSW Ministry of Health
- Emergency Care Institute (ECI)

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HIV Post Exposure Prophylaxis in Emergency Departments and Sexual Health Services

Situation

Sydney WorldPride is a global LGBTIQ+ festival that will take place from 17 February 2023 to 5 March 2023. It is expected there will be more than 500,000 visitors in Sydney during this time. Cities that have hosted WorldPride events previously have seen a notable rise in requests for access to human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

Background

PEP is a 28-day therapy that reduces the chance a person is infected with HIV after a possible exposure via sexual intercourse or sharing injection equipment (e.g. needles) with someone who may be living with HIV. PEP has been shown to be effective in animal and case control studies demonstrating approximately 80% reduction in preventing HIV transmission. PEP therapy must be started as soon as possible, and at no later than 72 hours, after suspected exposure to increase effectiveness.

Assessment

Sexual Health Services are the primary PEP providers. Emergency Departments play a vital role in ensuring timely access to PEP outside normal business hours. To meet the expected increased demand, Emergency Departments, Sexual Health Services and hospital Pharmacy Departments should ensure staff are trained and adequate therapy is available.

Clinical Recommendations

Emergency Departments:

- Assess stock levels in collaboration with Sexual Health Services and hospital Pharmacy Departments to ensure predicted increases in demand can be met.
- Ensure all relevant staff are aware of the location of PEP medications and local procedures surrounding PEP.
- Provide training to clinical staff about PEP. A My Health Learning module 'Emergency Department Provision of HIV Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)' is available (Course Code: 420971178).
- Utilise local Sexual Health Services for support, education and patient follow-up after PEP commencement, including processes to ensure positive HIV and STI tests are followed-up in the community.
- Sexual Health Infolink is available to support Emergency Departments on weekdays from 8am to 8pm on **1800 451 624**.

Sexual Health Services:

- Maintain adequate clinical staff capacity to manage PEP presentations.
- Develop referral and communication pathways with local Emergency Departments and other Health Services to direct PEP patients to Sexual Health Services where possible.

Required actions for the Local Health Districts/Networks

1. Distribute this Safety Information to all relevant clinicians, clinical departments who supply PEP therapy. Include this Safety Information in relevant handovers and safety huddles.
2. For more information, please email MOH-BBVSTI@health.nsw.gov.au.