

# THE 5 KEY SUPPORT SERVICES

## Guiding principles for doctors who diagnose or care for a person with HIV infection

The **5 Key Support Services** are considered important to individual patient care, community HIV prevention efforts and ultimately to the virtual elimination of HIV transmission in NSW.

Every person diagnosed with HIV has the right to and should be offered **5 Key Support Services**:

- Effective clinical management, including access to treatment
- Psychosocial support
- Counselling about prevention of transmission of HIV to others, including the role of treatment in reducing the risk of transmission
- Support to ensure that all at risk contacts or partners are identified and tested for HIV
- Linkage to relevant specialist, community and peer support services

The **5 Key Support Services** should be made available to every person with HIV from the time of diagnosis onwards along the continuum of care needed during their lifespan.

The **NSW HIV Support Program** is delivered through Health Protection New South Wales and each Local Health District. The Program ensures that expert advice, support and resources needed by doctors to deliver the **5 Key Support Services** are available at the time of making an HIV diagnosis. For information and resources see the NSW Health Ending HIV [website](#) or phone the NSW Communicable Diseases Branch on 02 9391 9195 and ask to speak with an HIV Surveillance Officer.



# TIPS FOR DOCTORS

## Before giving the diagnosis:

- ☑ Access the resources on the NSW Health Ending HIV [website](#) especially those resources for doctors and patients focusing on the time of diagnosis.
- ☑ Be aware of your responsibilities under the NSW *Public Health Act 2010*, which are to:
  - Inform the patient of their diagnosis, prognosis, treatment options and how the patient can prevent transmitting HIV to others;
  - Advise the patient to take reasonable precautions to minimise the risk of HIV transmission to others, which include:
    - › using a condom during sexual intercourse or
    - › knowing that they have an HIV viral load of less than 200 copies/mL, usually as a result of being on effective treatment for HIV or
    - › confirming a sexual partner is taking HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
  - Initiate and monitor partner notification.
- ☑ Talk with an HIV expert through the NSW HIV Support Program. A local HIV expert will usually be in contact with you, otherwise call the NSW Communicable Diseases Branch on 02 9391 9195 to speak with an HIV team member who can link you with an HIV clinical expert.
- ☑ If required, ensure to book an interpreter: call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450.
- ☑ If required, ensure access to information and support in the relevant language via the NSW Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service ([www.mhahs.org.au](http://www.mhahs.org.au)) or call 02 9515 1234.
- ☑ Be aware of the [NSW Sexual Health Infolink](#) (SHIL) which prioritises calls from doctors. Call 1800 451 624, Monday to Friday, 09:00–17:30. SHIL provides telephone support to health professionals and the public. SHIL's services include STI/HIV information, referrals for care and partner notification assistance (including for HIV risk contacts known only via social media). SHIL can also connect you with your local Sexual Health Service.

## When giving the diagnosis:

- ☑ Access and utilise the scripts in Giving an HIV diagnosis.
- ☑ Assess the patient for emotional, cognitive, psychological and social issues.
- ☑ Encourage the patient to start antiretroviral therapy (ART) as soon as possible. Reinforce:
  - ART has made HIV a manageable chronic disease and is safe and effective.
  - Early initiation and ongoing adherence to ART supports better health outcomes for individuals. Additionally, its impact on the viral load reduces the risk of HIV being transmitted to others.
- ☑ If you are not an authorised prescriber of ART, it is important that you immediately link the patient to a specialist HIV/Sexual Health Service or to a GP HIV s100 prescriber.
- ☑ Every effort should be made to support the patient's retention in care and adherence to treatment. A patient-centred approach should include:
  - Discussion about the importance of always being linked to care and support.
  - Identification of barriers and solutions to the patient linking to and being retained in care and commencing and adhering to ART.
  - Early referral to specialist and support services, including to a psychosocial service for assessment of needs and a peer organisation for support. Counsellors are available at local Sexual Health Services and there are specialist multidisciplinary HIV community teams that provide assessment, support and case management.
  - Systems to optimise linkage to and retention in care and treatment adherence.
- ☑ Provide the patient with the resources for people newly diagnosed.
- ☑ Document partner notification discussions, agreed methods and outcomes in patient notes.

## After giving the diagnosis:

- ☑ Follow up on referrals and take action to re-engage the patient if they have not presented.
- ☑ Check that the patient has notified sexual and injecting partners that they agreed to notify.
- ☑ At each appointment revisit HIV transmission risks and prevention measures and level of engagement with care and adherence to treatment.
- ☑ Seek ongoing advice through SHIL or your HIV Support Program contact as needed.

# KEY SUPPORT SERVICE 1

## Effective clinical management, including access to treatment

### Guiding principles

HIV treatment (antiretroviral therapy (ART)) enables people with HIV to live long and healthy lives. With treatment, HIV infection is now considered a chronic condition best managed through a patient centred, multidisciplinary approach involving the individual with HIV, doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, specialist support services and peer and community based support, depending on the needs of each individual.

All people diagnosed with HIV should receive appropriate clinical management including:

- Encouragement and support to start ART as soon as possible
- Rapid referral to an HIV/sexual health specialist
- Immune, virological, psychological, social and mental health assessment
- Ongoing monitoring and support to optimise engagement in care, treatment uptake and adherence, and self-management.

Commencing ART as soon as possible following diagnosis is recommended because of the strong evidence of personal health benefits in the prevention of AIDS, other serious illnesses and premature mortality.

Evidence demonstrates that ART resulting in viral suppression significantly reduces the risk of HIV being transmitted to others.

Lifelong adherence to ART is necessary to gain the full benefits of treatment and to minimise the risk of drug resistance or treatment failure.

It is important that clinicians work with their patients and/or refer them to specialist and/or peer services to identify and resolve any barriers that present to their engagement in care and their adherence to ART.

Doctors diagnosing and/or caring for a person with HIV infection need to ensure that each of the **5 Key Support Services** are made available to their patient.

Resources are available on the NSW Health Ending HIV website at [www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv). See back page for key resources.

# KEY SUPPORT SERVICE 2

## Psychosocial support

### Guiding principles

Psychosocial support for people with HIV provides opportunity to build capacity and confidence to self-manage HIV as a chronic disease and negotiate the health system.

Psychosocial support can be as beneficial for a person who presents as highly functional, in terms of supporting autonomy and self-management, as it can be for a person with complex needs.

People living with HIV in difficult psychosocial situations are at greater risk of loss to follow up, disease progression and transmitting HIV to others. Psychosocial support can benefit patients in a range of situations, including where they have experienced recent incarceration, homelessness, financial difficulties, mental illness, dependence on alcohol or other drugs, difficulty engaging with healthcare and treatment fatigue.

Adequate psychosocial support is therefore essential and should also be made available to the patient's partner/s, family and caregiver/s from the time of the diagnosis onwards.

Psychosocial support may include education, counselling, social support and other forms of assistance depending on individual needs.

Some people will require acute or short term support, while others will require ongoing and more complex support. The need by individuals for support may change over time and may be triggered by particular events (e.g. diagnosis, loss of a partner).

While a GP is often the cornerstone of support for their patients, referrals to appropriate specialist, community and peer services are encouraged to ensure comprehensive support and management. Early referral will help prevent the development of crisis situations associated with poor outcomes such as self-harm.

Social workers, counsellors and psychologists can be accessed through local Sexual Health and HIV Services. There are also specialist multidisciplinary HIV community teams that provide assessment, support and case management (see **Key Support Service 5**).

A person with HIV needs to be supported to be part of the problem solving process, including the identification of both barriers to their participation in care and adherence to ART and solutions tailored to their personal situation.

Resources are available on the NSW Health Ending HIV website at [www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv). See back page for key resources.

# KEY SUPPORT SERVICE 3

## Counselling about prevention of transmission of HIV to others, including the role of treatment in reducing the risk of HIV transmission

### Guiding principles

There is strong evidence demonstrating that where individuals maintain good adherence to ART, it results in an undetectable HIV viral load. This in turn greatly reduces the risk of sexual transmission of HIV. A combination prevention approach is recommended for people with HIV to prevent transmission to others, including to start ART as soon as possible, adhere to ART, correctly and consistently use condoms during sex and not share injecting equipment.

The NSW *Public Health Act*, 2010 places a responsibility on doctors who diagnose a patient with HIV infection to:

- Inform the patient of their diagnosis, prognosis, treatment options and how the patient can prevent transmitting HIV to others;
- Advise the patient to take reasonable precautions to minimise the risk of HIV transmission to others, which include:
  - › using a condom during sexual intercourse or
  - › knowing that they have an HIV viral load of less than 200 copies/mL, usually as a result of being on effective treatment for HIV or
  - › confirming a sexual partner is taking HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
- Initiate and monitor partner notification.

A patient may need support to carefully consider when, how and to whom they need to disclose (or share) their HIV-positive status, treatments and viral suppression. They may find it useful to talk with a social worker, counsellor or psychologist at a sexual health or HIV service, and/or to talk with a peer from Positive Life NSW or ACON about how to approach disclosure.

Clinicians should maintain regular discussion with patients about possible risk behaviours such as unprotected sex and drug and alcohol use. A diagnosis of a sexually transmitted infection can be an indicator of HIV transmission risk.

**Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)** enables HIV-negative sexual partners and those who have shared injecting equipment to receive preventative treatment. PEP must however be taken within 72 hours of the potential exposure to HIV. It is therefore important to identify any individuals exposed to HIV risk as soon as possible so they can be offered PEP if the exposure is within the 72 hour timeframe. It is useful to educate people with HIV about PEP to support effective management should a risk exposure occur in the future (e.g. if a condom breaks). The NSW PEP Hotline is 1800 737 669.

**Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)** is the use of ART by a person not infected with HIV but at risk of HIV infection, for the purpose of preventing acquisition of HIV. An example is where PrEP is taken by a person not infected with HIV, who is in a relationship with a person with HIV. This approach can be discussed with people at HIV risk, who can be directed to seek advice from a Sexual Health or HIV Service, a doctor with HIV experience or phone SHIL 1800 451 624.

Resources are available on the NSW Health Ending HIV website at [www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv). See back page for key resources.

# KEY SUPPORT SERVICE 4

## Support to ensure that all at risk partners are identified and tested for HIV

### Guiding principles

Partner notification (also known as contact tracing) involves identifying all sexual partners and any individual with whom the person with diagnosed HIV infection has shared injecting equipment and notifying those identified of their exposure and that they need to be tested for HIV.

Partner notification should start with the most recent sexual partner or individual with whom injecting equipment was shared and go back as far as the most recent known HIV negative test or to when unprotected sex or sharing of injection equipment began, whichever was the most recent.

Partner notification is a public health priority as it identifies and supports testing of those most at risk of HIV infection.

It is the diagnosing clinician's responsibility to initiate discussion with all new patients newly diagnosed with HIV about partners who may have been exposed to, or be the source of the infection, to enable follow up of those individuals. Further discussion on partner identification and notification may be delegated within the clinic/service or referred to the specialist sexual health or HIV service that the patient will be attending.

Assistance with partner notification, particularly if there are partners at risk of HIV for whom only on-line contact information is available, or if the diagnosing clinician is otherwise unable to identify and/or follow up all people potentially at risk, is available from the local specialist sexual health or HIV service and from the [NSW Enhanced Partner Notification Service](#) accessible via the [NSW Sexual Health Infolink \(SHIL\)](#) on 1800 451 624.

The clinician or their delegate should work collaboratively with the patient in efforts to identify former and current sexual partners, those people with whom they have shared injecting equipment, and any other person at risk. The clinician and the patient will need to plan strategies for ensuring the follow up of these partners.

The notification of partners can be completed by the patient, clinician or a specialist sexual health or HIV service. If the patient is taking responsibility for notifying a former or current partner, it is important that the clinician checks with the patient on progress at each subsequent clinic visit and provides support or changes the agreement on who is to follow up should the patient be unable to inform any individual with an HIV risk exposure.

As part of a patient's ongoing care, the managing clinician should periodically review recent partners with the patient in order to identify any new contacts at risk of HIV infection.

Resources are available on the NSW Health Ending HIV website at [www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv). See back page for key resources.

# KEY SUPPORT SERVICE 5

## Linkage to relevant specialist, community and peer support services

### Guiding principles

There are a range of specialist, community and peer support services in NSW to support you and your patient. These services include both specialised HIV and mainstream services. It is important that referral to these services occurs as early as possible to maintain quality of life and optimise health outcomes. These services can assist with HIV management decisions, psychosocial support, prevention counselling and other issues.

Key specialist assessment and case management services for people with HIV are summarised in Table 1.

Table 2 lists key peer support organisations. The NSW Health HIV service directory offers a full listing of relevant services, see [www.ashm.org.au/resources/HIV-Resources/serviceslocator/](http://www.ashm.org.au/resources/HIV-Resources/serviceslocator/). Other resources can be found on the NSW Health Ending HIV website [www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv).

# KEY SUPPORT SERVICES

*Table 1. Specialised assessment and management services for people with HIV*

SERVICE AND REACH	DESCRIPTION
Local Sexual Health Services - throughout NSW	Local Sexual Health Services (SHS) offer a range of clinical, psychosocial, mental health, allied health and public health services (or can facilitate an appropriate referral) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– support in adjusting to a new HIV diagnosis</li> <li>– specific support relating to engagement in care, disclosure, negotiating sexual safety, and treatment and adherence issues</li> <li>– assistance maintaining healthy lifestyle choices</li> <li>– assessment for and referral to specialist services</li> <li>– assistance with planning care for patients with complex needs</li> <li>– assistance to GPs and their patients with partner notification including: with identification of at risk partners, overcoming barriers to notifying sexual partners and any person who has shared injecting equipment, and conducting partner notification</li> <li>– psychological therapy for mental health, drug use and other issues</li> </ul> Call the NSW Sexual Health Infolink on 1800 451 624 for your nearest counsellor/social worker/clinical psychologist/dietician, or find your closest SHS at <a href="http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/pages/sexual-health-clinics.aspx">www.health.nsw.gov.au/sexualhealth/pages/sexual-health-clinics.aspx</a> . The NSW Sexual Health Infolink website is at: <a href="http://www.shil.nsw.gov.au/">www.shil.nsw.gov.au/</a>
ADAHPS – state wide service	ADAHPS (formally the AIDS Dementia and HIV Psychiatry Service) is a state wide multidisciplinary outreach team providing neuropsychological assessment and shared case management for people with diagnosed or suspected HIV related cognitive impairment and complex needs such as: mental illness, drug and alcohol dependence and other medical conditions; and for those in need of HIV Supported Accommodation. <a href="http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/adahps/pages/default.aspx">www.health.nsw.gov.au/adahps/pages/default.aspx</a> Phone: 02 9382 8600 Email: <a href="mailto:adahps@health.nsw.gov.au">adahps@health.nsw.gov.au</a> <a href="#">NSW HIV Support Program Video Series</a>
HIV Outreach Team – South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Local Health Districts and Southern NSW	The HIV Outreach Team (HOT) is a multidisciplinary outreach team working across South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Local Health Districts providing case management supporting acute or chronic HIV related issues including medication, nutrition, housing, mental health, alcohol & drug use and finances. <a href="http://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/hiv_outreach_team/">www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/hiv_outreach_team/</a> Phone: 02 9382 8666 Email: <a href="mailto:hivcommunityteam@health.nsw.gov.au">hivcommunityteam@health.nsw.gov.au</a> <a href="#">NSW HIV Support Program Video Series</a>
Positive Central – Sydney Local Health District and Western NSW	Positive Central is a multidisciplinary HIV outreach / case management team providing case management and support to people with complex health concerns. Positive Central's focus is on individual and group allied health support for people with HIV in Sydney Local Health District, focussing on nutrition, housing, mental health, alcohol & drug use and finances via social work, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and dietetics. Phone: 02 9395 0444 Email: <a href="mailto:positivecentral@sswahs.nsw.gov.au">positivecentral@sswahs.nsw.gov.au</a>
Case Management – state wide	Case management support is available for people with HIV in all Local Health Districts across NSW. Assessment and case management support is delivered via the three teams above on the basis of geographical location radiating from the centre of Sydney: Adahps covers the northern NSW sector, the HOT Team cover Southern NSW, and Positive Central covers Western NSW.
Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS)	MHAHS is a state wide service that provides psycho-social support to individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, living with HIV or undergoing treatment for hepatitis C, through bilingual/bicultural co-workers. Multilingual consumer resources on HIV and viral hepatitis are also available. The MHAHS works with people from more than 20 language groups. Referrals from both individual practitioners and agencies are encouraged. <a href="http://www.mhahs.org.au">www.mhahs.org.au</a> Phone: 9515 1234/1800 108 098 Email: <a href="mailto:info@mhahs.org.au">info@mhahs.org.au</a> <a href="#">NSW HIV Support Program Video Series</a>
Supported accommodation	Supported accommodation services are available for people with HIV with complex needs – applications are coordinated through Adahps. <a href="http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/adahps/Pages/accommodation.aspx">www.health.nsw.gov.au/adahps/Pages/accommodation.aspx</a> Phone: 02 9382 8602
Bobby Goldsmith Foundation (BGF)	BGF is a state wide service that provides casework, referrals and outreach to regional and rural NSW, chronic disease self-management workshops and information and advocacy workshops, housing support, financial counselling and financial assistance for PLHIV who meet BGF's financial eligibility criteria. <a href="http://www.bgf.org.au/">www.bgf.org.au/</a> Phone: 02 9283 8666 Email: <a href="mailto:bgf@bgf.org.au">bgf@bgf.org.au</a>



# KEY SUPPORT SERVICES

*Table 2. Key services offering peer support*

SERVICE AND REACH	DESCRIPTION
Positive Life NSW	Positive Life provides information, advocacy, referral and advice on issues relevant to people with HIV. <a href="http://www.positivelife.org.au">www.positivelife.org.au</a> Ph. 1800 245 677 <a href="#">NSW HIV Support Program Video Series</a>
ACON	ACON have a range of services specifically for people newly diagnosed with HIV, including peer-based workshops, a priority counselling service and one on one peer based support. Psychologists and counsellors can be accessed through ACON. <a href="http://www.acon.org.au">www.acon.org.au</a> Ph. 1800 063 060 <a href="#">NSW HIV Support Program Video Series</a>
Pozhet	Pozhet provides support, information, events and referrals for heterosexual people with HIV in NSW. <a href="http://www.pozhet.org.au">www.pozhet.org.au</a> (includes info about the Pozhet Facebook group) Ph. 1800 812 404 (Heterosexual HIV Info line) <a href="#">NSW HIV Support Program Video Series</a>
Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)	SWOP provides peer-based outreach, support and referrals to sex workers living within NSW. <a href="http://www.swop.org.au/">www.swop.org.au/</a> Ph. (02) 9206 2166 <a href="#">NSW HIV Support Program Video Series</a>
NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA)	NUAA provides education and training, practical support, information, referral and advocacy to people who use drugs, their friends and allies. <a href="http://www.nuaa.org.au">www.nuaa.org.au</a> Ph. (02) 8354 7300 or 1800 644 413 <a href="#">NSW HIV Support Program Video Series</a>

Key resources for doctors and people newly diagnosed with HIV available at [www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv)

# RESOURCE PACKAGE

## The HIV Support Program resource package

The resources below were developed as a source of information on specific issues to better support HIV management and service access:

### Printable resources for doctors:

- What is the *HIV Support Program* (HSP)?
- Giving an HIV diagnosis: a resource for diagnosing doctors
- The *5 Key Support Services* – guiding principles for doctors
- What is shared care for HIV?
- Preparing a patient with HIV for antiretroviral therapy (ART)
- Supporting adherence to HIV antiretroviral therapy (ART)
- Brief interventions for prevention of HIV and STI infections

### Printable resources for people newly diagnosed:

- Just diagnosed with HIV?
- Benefits of HIV treatment

### An online [HIV service directory](#) for health professionals and people diagnosed with HIV

### Videos for doctors and people newly diagnosed (3-6 minutes each) covering the following topics:

- An overview of the **5 Key Support Services** for people diagnosed with HIV and the **HIV Support Program** for diagnosing doctors.
- **Key Support Service 1:** An overview; HIV treatment - antiretroviral therapy; Retention in care and adherence to HIV treatment; HIV management in rural and regional areas; Role of community pharmacies in accessing HIV treatment and; Shared care for HIV.
- **Key Support Service 2:** An overview; The AIDS Dementia and HIV Psychiatry Service; The HIV Outreach Team and; The H2M program.
- **Key Support Service 3:** An overview; Disclosure and legal requirements and; The management of people who put others at risk of HIV.
- **Key Support Service 4:** An overview; The Enhanced Partner Notification System and; Peer Support for partner notification.
- **Key Support Service 5:** An overview and vignettes on the following services; Positive Life NSW, ACON, PozHet, NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA), Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP), Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS) and Sydney Sexual Health Centre (SSHC).