

Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



Getting Things Done.
Making Things Fair.

Friday, 1 December, 2017

ELIMINATING STIGMA IN HIV TREATMENT

Victoria is the first Australian state to endorse an international statement that people living with HIV on effective treatment cannot transmit the virus.

The World AIDS Day theme “HIV is still here and still matters” forms the backdrop for the Andrews Labor Government announcement of \$300,000 for Living Positive Victoria to develop the state’s first HIV peer navigation program.

While opening the event in Victoria this morning, Minister for Health Jill Hennessy said the Andrews Labor Government’s backing of the Undetectable Equals Untransmittable (U=U) Consensus Statement was backed by action and funding to help dispel myths about HIV.

The statement has the backing of leading health researchers around the world and supports solid evidence that people living with HIV on antiretroviral therapy for at least six months and have an ongoing undetectable viral load have a negligible to non-existent risk of sexual transmission of HIV.

The Labor Government is also making it easier for community health providers to offer HIV testing. From next year health workers learning to administer HIV testing and counselling will have more choices as to where they undertake their training.

The more people are tested, the more people we can diagnose and link into care, treatment and support - and the closer Victoria will be to achieving its ambitious target of eliminating all new cases of HIV by 2020.

As part of its HIV response, the Labor Government has also released the Victorian HIV Strategy 2017-2020, provided \$1.2 million to establish an HIV cure research consortium and also provided \$1.5 million to the PrEPX study – to help reduce the risk of HIV transmission.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

“Stigma and misinformation about HIV stop people getting tested and treated – we want Victorians to get tested, get supported and get treated.”

“We’ve set ambitious targets so we can pursue our ultimate goal: a cure for HIV. We’ve already seen a reduction in Victorian HIV notifications with our PrEPX trial, and that is an excellent outcome – but there is more to do.”

“We’re working with affected communities, scientists and clinicians to improve the lives of vulnerable Victorians at risk of or affected by HIV.”

Quotes attributable to President of Living Positive Victoria Christabel Millar

“Living Positive Victoria warmly welcomes the Victorian Government’s endorsement of the U=U Consensus Statement and support to develop the first HIV Peer Navigator program.”

“Our collaborative partnerships provide the opportunity to achieve the Government’s goals to end stigma and end to HIV.”

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