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WHEN WAS YOUR LAST HIV CHECK?

South Western Sydney Local Health District is encouraging people to have a HIV test as screening is now easier and faster than ever before.

The District's Head of Immunology and HIV Medicine, Dr Louise Evans said that HIV doesn't discriminate and can affect people of all ages, gender and cultures.

"People may be unaware that they're carrying the virus. As well as risking their own health, people with undiagnosed HIV infection are at risk of passing the virus on to others without knowing," Dr Evans said.

The number of HIV tests done in NSW continues to increase with over 500,000 tests conducted in 2016, a seven per cent increase on the number of tests in 2015.

"Between 2015 and 2016 there was a 31 per cent increase in HIV testing performed by SWSLHD services.

Dr Evans said that HIV screening has been facilitated with high quality, safe and innovative HIV testing services such as rapid HIV home testing, and express clinics that offer rapid result turn-around times and after-hours/drop in clinics.

"We need people at risk of HIV to test regularly so they can receive early treatment and prevent transmission of HIV to others," she said.

Most (82 per cent) new HIV infections reported in 2016 were in gay and homosexually-active men, with heterosexual people accounting for 15 per cent. One third of people newly diagnosed with HIV presented with signs of late infection, which could have been avoided with earlier testing.

"All pregnant women should be tested irrespective of risk, as treatment during pregnancy is very effective in preventing infection from mother to child.

"Achieving high levels of testing, treatment, and maintaining safe sex practices are key if we are to achieve our ambitious target of ending HIV transmission by 2020," she said.