

TREATMENT FOR HIV: THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN POLICY AND DATA IN NSW

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SETTING TREATMENT TARGETS

The NSW HIV Strategy 2012-2015: A New Era committed NSW to reinvigorating efforts to increase to 90% the number of people living with HIV on treatment. Consistent with coalition theory on change, leadership provided through the NSW partnership facilitated an integrated and multi-strategic approach spanning the continuum from system reform to promotion campaigns.

COLLABORATION & COORDINATION

Leadership on treatment uptake was provided from the NSW HIV partnership:

- Champions with the same core beliefs including representative HIV community organisations (ACON & Positive Life NSW), HIV/Sexual Health Service Directors, GP s100 prescribers and researchers ensured reach across all sectors
- Champions in decision making positions including the NSW Minister for Health & NSW Chief Health Officer enabled a policy and funding focus on the promotion of HIV treatment uptake
- An Implementation Committee of champions with expertise provided advice on the evidence and strategies
- Collaboration with clinicians and researchers occurred on ways to deliver evidence & monitor outcomes

COMMUNICATING THE EVIDENCE

The NSW partnership recognised that evidence was crucial to changing conservative approaches to treatment prescribing. Efforts to deliver the evidence included:

- Communicating research findings
- Enhanced surveillance
- Identifying the key indicators and pathways for reporting so that performance could be monitored
- Providing regular feedback on strategy implementation
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv>

UPDATING KNOWLEDGE OF HIV COMMUNITY

Targeted efforts in NSW set about replacing myths held about HIV treatment and promoting early uptake of treatment through community lead campaigns and resources:

- <http://endinghiv.org.au/nsw/treat-early/>
- <http://takecontrol.positivelife.org.au>

STRENGTHENING THE BASE FOR CHANGE

ENGAGING WITH CLINICIANS:

1. HIV Support Program (HSP)

The HSP is a key initiative established to provide expert support to primary care clinicians at the time of new HIV diagnoses. Expected elements in delivery of care were established. These, the 5 Key Support Services, included:

- effective clinical management
- HIV prevention counselling
- psychosocial support
- contact tracing
- specialist and community service linkages

2. Resources to support clinicians

A range of resources were developed to support clinical management and conversations with patients
www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/hiv

3. HIV S100 Prescriber Forums

Regular forums held by the NSW Chief Health Officer provided opportunity to discuss the evidence for treatment.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH HIV

System redesign occurred to resolve barriers to treatment access:

- providing support for treatment costs
- making public pharmacies easier to access
- working with other jurisdictions and the Commonwealth government on:
 - removal of the CD4 count restriction on accessing subsidised treatment
 - broadened treatment dispensing to community pharmacies.

OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

Treatment coverage in NSW has increased from an estimated 54-70% in 2012 to over 90% in June 2015 for people living with HIV and attending public sexual health clinics.

Among the cohort of 698 NSW residents notified with newly diagnosed HIV infection from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2014, 447 (64%) were reported to have commenced ART within six months of diagnosis.

In addition, 49% of the 2013 new diagnoses cohort was on ART within three months of diagnosis, compared with 61% of 2014 new diagnoses cohort. It would appear that early commencement of ART is increasing.

