

# Delivering the resources to support effective HIV care in NSW

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## Background - the HIV Support Program

The **NSW HIV Strategies** since 2012 committed NSW to achieving the virtual elimination of HIV transmission in NSW by 2020. A priority action area was to enhance support for diagnosing doctors and people newly diagnosed, with the aim to improve case management and public health outcomes at the time of diagnosis. In NSW over one third of people newly diagnosed with HIV are diagnosed by a doctor inexperienced in HIV management. In May 2013 the HIV Support Program (HSP) commenced to provide advice and support for doctors at the time of making a diagnosis. By supporting doctors, people diagnosed with HIV can receive improved access to 5 Key Support Services (SKSS). The 5 Key Support Services are to be offered at the time of diagnosis and during subsequent care by diagnosing and/or treating doctors.

Every person diagnosed with HIV in NSW has the right to:

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

When NSW Health is notified by a laboratory of a positive HIV test result and the requesting doctor is not known to be experienced in HIV, an HIV expert (HSP coordinator) in the same locality is informed. The HSP coordinator promptly contacts the doctor to assess the level of support required by the doctor to give the diagnosis and initiate provision of the 5 Key Support Services to the patient. The HSP coordinator coordinates provision of tailored support.

From 9 May 2013 to 30 June 2016 the HSP supported 414 doctors, with over 90% welcoming the support. In mid-2014 HSP Coordinators identified that resources were needed to support the delivery of a standard of care across NSW. Here we describe the resource development process and the resources produced.

## Results – resources produced

36 resources were developed for doctors and for people newly diagnosed with HIV: 9 printable resources, 25 short videos and a web based directory of all HIV related services in NSW. A website at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv/Pages/support-program.aspx> hosts the resources.

### Resources to support 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
- HIV shared care for GPs
- 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

### GIVING AN HIV DIAGNOSIS: A RESOURCE FOR DIAGNOSING DOCTORS

**1. EFFECTIVE CLINICAL MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING ACCESS TO TREATMENT**

- Reassure to your patient HIV is a treatable, manageable chronic disease
- Highlight that treatment is safe, effective and starting treatment as soon as possible after diagnosis has many individual health benefits
- Discuss options of who can manage their HIV, including yourself and other
- Organise appropriate referrals to specialist services

**2. PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT**

- Ensure any urgent psychosocial issues are addressed
- Many patients benefit from counselling
- Advise them that there are many support services and provide them with the "Just Diagnosed with HIV?" pamphlet
- Refer to the Directory of HIV Services to assist in identifying appropriate services
- Advise that services are available in their local area

**3. COUNSELLING ABOUT PREVENTION OF TRANSMISSION OF HIV TO OTHERS**

- You have a medico-legal responsibility to discuss your patient about HIV, discuss laws and prevention of HIV transmission in others
- Assess possible HIV transmission risks
- Discuss prevention of transmission, including condom use, benefits of treatment and risk reduction strategies
- Discuss who might be at transmission risk
- Advise your patient not to have sex with a regular partner until the last 72 hours
- Explain the availability of PEP for risk-reduction
- If you are unsure whether these contacts have transmission risk, call the PEP hotline 1800 737 647

**4. SUPPORT TO ENSURE THAT ALL AT-RISK CONTACTS ARE IDENTIFIED AND TESTED FOR HIV**

- Discuss your consultation with the patient
- Help the patient to identify partners at risk of infection
- Agree with the patient on who (clinician or patient) will notify each partner
- Ensure the patient has appropriate support and relevant information to provide to any partners they agree to notify, this may include details of peer support for partner but partner notification
- Make a plan to follow-up with the patient within an agreed time frame
- Support to help you with partner notification is available from your local sexual health service, or via the Sexual Health Infolink (SHI) 1800 451 424, who can also help notify partners known only through social media

**5. LINKAGE TO RELEVANT SPECIALIST, COMMUNITY AND PEER SUPPORT SERVICES**

- Access with the referral process of your patient to appropriate clinical services, psychosocial support or relevant allied health services, peer and community services
- Arrange a follow up appointment with your patient to discuss how they are managing their HIV diagnosis, if they are linked to with support services and if they have undertaken partner tracing

**44** I wish that this diagnosis can mean highlighting. Although it's a serious disease, with treatment it is a manageable condition. Most people will still live several healthy lives. In terms of what will not you are managing your HIV will not prevent you from leading a good life. A specialist doctor has not yet said that a 50% follow-up appointment will not be arranged as well as a referral to a specialist. In terms of treatment, it's safe, effective, most people don't even know they have a chronic disease. Research that starting treatment as soon as possible after diagnosis has many individual health benefits. We can talk over this with your specialist. Consider necessary reproductive issues to treatment. **55**

**44** As you meet with your local support services you might like to contact to assist you in finding out your own diagnosis? Let's talk about the doctor support that might be useful to you now and will also give information about services and organisations that can help. If you need to talk to someone you can contact. Think about who you might talk to because you are not someone you are HIV positive you can't "invent" them. **56**

**44** The public health system suggests that you not advise a second partner of your HIV status in a case, who includes both and not one, unless you are being correctly questioned about transmission of HIV. It is important to think that knowledge is power. However, you are not being notified by your partner, may make that more difficult to know that something that will be discussed further with your HIV care provider. Remember to continue 100% of the time and not change your behaviour until you have had a recent negative test result to prevent transmission to second and subsequent partners. Starting treatment will not reduce your risk of transmitting the virus to others. If you have not started yet, we will continue in the next 72 hours, ensure you are linked to have them take a medication that could help prevent them getting HIV. It is from someone who may be of use? **57**

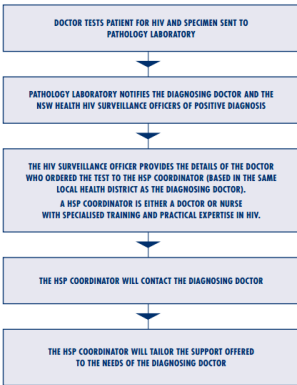
**44** We can help you with letting your second partner or others of risk know that they should test for HIV. You don't have to tell them how you feel, we can do that for you without revealing who you are. It will be a good idea to let them know that you are a doctor. If you are not comfortable doing that, we can help you with that. **58**

**44** I can also assist you in finding other services you may need in the future and that you are not alone. You may not think that you are not alone, but you may find more useful in the future. In addition, if you would like to be linked to a peer living with HIV, you can contact us to discuss your options to assist you with this. **59**

Note: Refer you and other teaming back with your SHI to the SHI 1800 451 424 and telehealth to Patient 1800 812 404.

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## WHAT IS THE HIV SUPPORT PROGRAM (HSP)?



### Q. WHAT ARE THE 5 KEY SUPPORT SERVICES THAT EVERY PATIENT NEWLY DIAGNOSED SHOULD BE OFFERED?

The 5 Key Support Services are to be offered to any person newly diagnosed with HIV infection in NSW at the time of their diagnosis and during subsequent care by the diagnosing doctor whether or not the doctor receives assistance from the HSP.



### Q. HOW CAN A DOCTOR ENSURE THEY GET SUPPORT FROM OF AN HSP COORDINATOR BEFORE THEY GIVE AN HIV DIAGNOSIS TO A PATIENT?

Any doctor can self-request support from the HSP. Call the NSW Health Communicable Diseases Branch on 02 9391195 and ask to speak with an HIV Surveillance Officer. HSP Coordinators strive to contact diagnosing doctors before the doctor gives an HIV diagnosis to a patient but this is not always possible.

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### Resources for newly diagnosed patients

- Just diagnosed with HIV?
- Benefits of HIV treatment

### Short videos

25 short videos for doctors, health care workers and people newly diagnosed with HIV (each 3-6 minutes duration). These videos present aspects of the 5 Key Support Services and a diverse range of peer and community services.

## Conclusion

A rigorous and inclusive approach resulted in high quality resources, agreed upon by a diverse range of stakeholders in the NSW HIV sector. The approach helped further align the sector and the HSP towards the goals of the *NSW HIV Strategy 2016-2020*. For more information on the HIV Support Program and resources visit: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv/Pages/support-program.aspx>



<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/endinghiv/Pages/video-series.aspx>

## Methods – resource development process

The NSW Health Sexually Transmitted Infections Programs Unit (STIPU) and ASHM coordinated the development of resources through a multistage consultation, review and approval process involving the HSP Coordinators, GP HIV specialists, psychologists, social workers, specialist multidisciplinary HIV teams, peer and community organisations, consumers and others.

### Contributors to the NSW HIV Support Program resources for doctors and patients

Expert advisors external to NSW Health	Peer and community organisations and consumers	NSW Health contributors
Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council in NSW	AIDS Council of NSW (ACON)	AIDS Dementia and HIV Psychiatry Service (ADAHPS)
ASHM	Bobby Goldsmith Foundation	Health Protection NSW, NSW Ministry of Health
Family Planning NSW	HIV/AIDS Legal Centre Inc. (NSW)	HIV Support Program coordinators
HIV specialised general practitioners (GP doctors)	Individual consumers living with HIV	HIV and related programs managers and health promoters in each local health district
GPs and Primary Health Care Nurses	NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA)	HIV Outreach Team (HOT), South Eastern Sydney and Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health Districts
North Coast GP Training	Positive Life NSW	H2M Service (HIV/HCV Mental Health in Primary Care)
STIPU GP Working Group	Pozhet	NSW Multicultural HIV & Hepatitis Service
University of Newcastle, Department of Rural Health	Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP)	Positive Central, Sydney and Western NSW Local Health Districts
		Sexual Health Services Directors, psychologists, doctors, nurses, social workers
		Sexually Transmitted Infections Programs Unit (STIPU)
		Social Workers in HIV (SWHIV)

## JUST DIAGNOSED WITH HIV?

### DID YOU KNOW?

Everyone reacts differently to getting an HIV diagnosis but you will probably have lots of questions or wonder what it means for you. You may be wondering – how will I tell my partner/s, family or friends, will I still be able to work, will I get sick? Many people have the same questions. The most important thing you should know is that people with HIV who take medication to treat the virus have the similar life expectancy as anyone else.



### FIVE KEY AREAS YOUR GP SHOULD DISCUSS WITH YOU

1. Where to go for your medical assessment and treatment
2. Who you can talk to now about having HIV
3. How you can protect others (sexual partners/ injecting partners/ unborn child) from getting HIV
4. Ways you can tell current/ past partners/ who might be at risk of infection
5. Where you can get further support and assistance for the future and for any other issues of concern

If you are still unsure about any of these, please talk with your health service, doctor or GP or phone the Sexual Health Infolink 1800 451 424.

### DON'T HAVE MEDICARE?

You can still access health care, treatment and a range of other services – Ask your doctor for information about your closest Sexual Health Clinic – Call the Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service. Ph: 1800 100 098 – Call the NSW Sexual Health Infolink on 1800 451 424.



### THERE ARE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO YOU

Remember you are not alone. There are approximately 10 000 people living with HIV in New South Wales. If you feel you are not ready or can't talk to your friends or family, you can speak to any of the organisations listed over the page. There are many services, organisations and professionals who can assist you during this time. This support can be counselling or just someone to talk to, more information so you understand what HIV is and what the medical treatment will be, finding a doctor or perhaps you need some financial or housing assistance. If you are unsure where to go to ask for help call the Sexual Health Infolink 1800 451 424.

ACON and Positive Life NSW ensure the resources. ACON and Positive Life NSW ensure people are safe and access information to people living with HIV in a supportive way.



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