

## Media Release

Tuesday, 16 November 2024

# Testing and treatment numbers on the rise as GPs work to eliminate hepatitis in the community

Hepatitis C testing rates have tripled in our region in the past year and treatment rates continue to climb, thanks to a targeted program supporting GPs to identify and care for patients with the chronic health condition.

South Western Sydney GPs ranked first in NSW between April and June this year for hepatitis C treatment rates, prescribing 27 treatments, which equates to 54 per cent of total prescribed hepatitis C treatments across our region, according to the latest NSW Health report card.

During the same period, South Western Sydney primary and hospital services combined treated a total of 62 patients in the quarter, bringing the number of treated patients to date to 3,165, which represents a healthcare cost saving of just under \$10 million.

The NSW Health report card also highlighted improvements in hepatitis C testing in the tertiary sector while South Western Sydney PHN data showed a three-fold increase from 1,077 tests in 2023 to 3,323 in 2024 in the primary care sector.

With an eight-to-12-week treatment course of hepatitis C now easily accessible - and 95 per cent successful - the increase in testing and treatment rates corresponds with targeted local programs aimed at empowering GPs to manage their patients who have hepatitis C within the practice.

As part of a joint South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) and SWSPHN's Hepatitis Clinical Support and Quality Improvement Project, GPs and practice nurses are supported by a hepatitis Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) to increase the level of hepatitis C testing, as well as the treatment of people with hepatitis C.

In turn, Clinical Quality Improvement (CQI) focuses on recall, screening and treatment at-risk populations, as well as existing or newly acquired hepatitis C cases. SWSPHN has also developed a GP brochure which provides essential information and supports capacity building in primary practice.

SWSPHN Chief Executive Officer, Dr Keith McDonald PhD, said the campaign to reduce hepatitis C in the community was an important one.

### TO NEXT PAGE

**This activity is supported by funding from the Australian Government through the PHN program.**

South Western Sydney PHN is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting general practitioners, practice nurses and other primary health providers to deliver the best possible care for their patients. Our aim is to improve access to quality local healthcare for all residents living in the Bankstown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee LGAs. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, water and skies of South Western Sydney, the Darug, Dharawal and Gundungurra peoples, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

#### Media Enquiries:

Michelle Pozo  
Media and Communications Officer  
T: 4632 3020

#### Office Address:

Level 2, 1 Bolger St,  
Campbelltown NSW 2560

#### Mailing Address:

PO Box 90  
Macarthur Sq NSW 2560

P: 4632 3000  
F: 4625 9466  
E: [enquiries@swsphn.com.au](mailto:enquiries@swsphn.com.au)  
W: [swsphn.com.au](http://swsphn.com.au)  
ABN 74 605 441 067

## FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

“It is good to see all the hard work by SWSPHN and general practices in the South Western region having an effect on the numbers,” he said. “Congratulations on your efforts and on working towards a safer, healthier community for us all.”

The NSW Hepatitis C Strategy, 2022 to 2025, aims to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health concern in NSW by 2028.

Between 2021 and 2023 South Western Sydney had a 7.4 per cent higher prevalence of hepatitis C than the national average. Campbelltown and Fairfield LGAs have consistently higher rates with 53 per cent and 31 per cent above the NSW average. In 2022, an estimated 7,669 people were living in South Western Sydney with hepatitis C.

**Media Enquiries:**

Michelle Pozo  
Media and Communications Officer  
**T:** 4632 3020

**Office Address:**

Level 2, 1 Bolger St,  
Campbelltown NSW 2560

**Mailing Address:**

PO Box 90  
Macarthur Sq NSW 2560

**P:** 4632 3000  
**F:** 4625 9466  
**E:** [enquiries@swsphn.com.au](mailto:enquiries@swsphn.com.au)  
**W:** [swsphn.com.au](http://swsphn.com.au)  
**ABN** 74 605 441 067