

Media Release

HIV infection on the rise in Queensland

As 1 December World AIDS Day draws nearer Queensland Health, Senior Director Communicable Diseases Branch, Dr Christine Selvey, is urging Queenslanders not to become complacent about their sexual health and to practice safe sex.

“For the past few years, HIV infection has been on the rise in Queensland. In 2008, the number of people notified with a first HIV diagnosis in Queensland was 167,” said Dr Selvey.

This is the highest number of HIV notifications recorded since 1984.

“Notifications of other sexually transmissible infections such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea have also been rising in Queensland and other states for several years,” Dr Selvey said.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) can be transmitted sexually or through blood to blood contact. Left untreated, infection with HIV can lead to the development of life threatening illness, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

World AIDS Day is an internationally recognised day occurring on the 1st December each year.

AIDS Awareness Week runs in the week preceding World AIDS Day.

The aim of World AIDS Day and AIDS Awareness Week is to raise awareness in the community about HIV/AIDS issues.

This year’s World AIDS Day national theme is ‘Take Action. No Discrimination’.

Dr Selvey added, “HIV is a health issue of concern for the whole community and World AIDS Day is a time to reflect on what we can do as individuals and collectively to support people living with HIV and also to prevent further HIV infection.”

It also provides an opportunity to remind Queenslanders not to become complacent about their sexual health and to practice safe sex. Condoms and lubrication remain the best defence against HIV. HIV cannot be cured but it can be prevented.

Each year, Queensland Health together with partner non-government organisations especially those in the Queensland World AIDS Day Alliance, supports the World AIDS Day Project. The project supports the development of resources and regional events throughout Queensland.

Queensland Health works closely with a range of government and non-government organisations to implement the *Queensland HIV, Hepatitis C and Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2005-2011*.

To support delivery of a range of comprehensive strategies, Queensland Health works collaboratively with non-government organisations delivering education, prevention, treatment, care and support programs targeting populations at risk such as gay men, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Indigenous people.

For further information about World AIDS Day in Queensland and the organisations that form the Queensland World AIDS Day Alliance go to the website:

www.qldworldaidsday.org.au