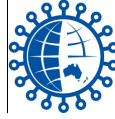


Media Release



ashm
Australasian Society for HIV Medicine

South West Sydney To Be Positive On World Cancer Day

Cancer Council NSW is taking to south west Sydney's streets on World Cancer Day (Thursday 4 February) as part of its *B-Positive Project*, providing cancer information and encouraging people to see their doctor to get tested for hepatitis B, a virus that can cause liver cancer.

Many people with hepatitis B don't even know they have the virus as often there are no symptoms. The virus is easily spread and can infect entire families.

South West Sydney is home to many people who were born in countries with higher rates of the hepatitis B virus – a major cause of liver cancer. Research shows cancer rates will hike locally unless action is taken now, which prompted Cancer Council to launch the *B-Positive Project* in late 2008.

The *B-Positive Project* aims to reverse this trend. Supported by local community groups, councils, and more than 160 doctors, it's the first pilot project of its kind in Australia to reach out to those infected with the hepatitis B virus.

"Unfortunately, exposure to the Hepatitis B virus is higher in south west Sydney and our research shows that local rates will increase further unless action is taken now," Dr Penman Chief Executive Officer of Cancer Council NSW said.

During World Cancer Day, special information booths will be set up in Liverpool, Fairfield and Cabramatta, where residents will be supported with information in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and other languages.

"We are in the midst of a community epidemic of liver cancer caused by hepatitis B," Dr Penman said.

"The good news is hepatitis B is easily prevented and treatable. This is why we urge the community to speak to their doctors now to safeguard their own and their family's health,"

Cancer Council, Hepatitis Australia, and the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM) have joined forces for World Cancer Day. Internationally the theme of the day is 'Joining Forces to Raise Awareness of Cancer-Causing Viruses'.

For information about hepatitis, call Hepatitis Australia's Info line on 1300 437 222 (1300 HEP ABC). To find out about Cancer Council NSW's B-Positive Project visit: www.cancercouncil.com.au/bpositive.

- Ends -

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Notes to news editors

- **Cancer Council NSW** is a community funded, community focused cancer charity dedicated to the defeat of cancer.
- **Australasian Society for HIV Medicine** is the peak Australasian organisation representing the medical and health sector in HIV, viral hepatitis and related areas.
- **Hepatitis Australia** provides national leadership and advocacy on viral hepatitis and supports partnerships for action to ensure the needs of Australians affected by or at risk of viral hepatitis are met.