
Start talking about HIV treatment: new campaign launched

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Ita Buttrose launched NAPWA's new campaign, 'Start the Conversation Today' on Friday 4 May. The campaign urges people living with HIV to get up to date with important new information about the benefits of HIV treatment for themselves and their partners. Many people with HIV are likely to be unaware of these advances.

Campaign advertisements are running across national print media and billboard posters appearing at key sites in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

The campaign theme is to encourage people with HIV to talk to their doctor about important new developments in HIV treatment and prevention.

NAPWA's campaign is the first of its kind in Australia to use mainstream media and public advertising sites to promote HIV treatment awareness. NAPWA has taken this step because of the significant implications that recent scientific advances have for the health of people with HIV.

Reacting to these advances, new US HIV treatment guidelines were released last month and now recommend treatment for ALL people with HIV, whether they are newly infected or have more advanced HIV infection. This reflects the growing opinion of [clinical](#) [1]Pertaining to or founded on observation and treatment of participants, as distinguished from theoretical or basic science. experts that delaying treatment can have negative health outcomes for a person living with HIV, and that current HIV treatments are more effective and better tolerated. Also, being on treatment has the important secondary benefit of reducing the risk of transmitting HIV to others, when used alongside proven methods like correct and consistent condom use.

Australia's leading HIV scientist, Professor David Cooper, director of the Kirby Institute at UNSW, Sydney, has welcomed the NAPWA campaign.

"It is very important that people with HIV are well informed about the benefits of being on HIV treatment - both the individual benefit for the patient and the secondary benefit that treatment has in helping reduce transmission of HIV to others.

"Even today, with the well tolerated and potent HIV treatments available, we still see people presenting at hospitals with very damaged immune systems and serious HIV related health issues, despite the strong evidence that early treatment is beneficial. Clearly, there are a lot of people out there who aren't up to date with the latest scientific thinking about the advantages of starting HIV treatment earlier rather than later."

Robert Mitchell, NAPWA President emphasised NAPWA's commitment to support every HIV positive person's right to manage their own health decisions, in consultation with their doctor.

"But people need the latest information to make fully informed decisions about managing their health. Unfortunately, many people with HIV are still unaware of recent treatment improvements, new information about living with HIV long term, and the added benefit that being on treatment can have in reducing the risk of HIV transmission", Mitchell said.

"NAPWA wants to support people to understanding that better treatments are here and it is a really good idea to think about all the potential benefits for our lives, and our friends, partners, and families. This is what NAPWA's campaign is all about."

Information for health professionals

The Australasian Society for HIV Medicine ([ASHM](#) [2]Australasian Society for HIV Medicine. The peak Australasian organisation representing the medical and health sector in HIV/AIDS and related areas.) is a peak organisation of health professionals in Australia and New Zealand who work in HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections ([STIs](#) [3][Sexually Transmissible (or Transmitted) Infection] Infections spread by the transfer of

organisms from person to person during sexual contact. Also called venereal disease (VD) (an older public health term) or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).). ASHM has created a basic "GP toolkit" designed to help health practitioners answer questions that might arise from the "Start the Conversation" campaign and to provide guidance on the clinical management of HIV. Visit www.ashm.org.au [4] for details.

Attachment	Size	Type
Simon O'Connor SPEECH.pdf [5]	526.42 KB	 PDF
Ita Buttrose SPEECH.pdf [6]	119.52 KB	 PDF

- [living with HIV](#)
- [Treating HIV](#)
- [starting treatments](#)

Links:

[1] <http://napwa.org.au/glossary/term/475>

[2] <http://napwa.org.au/glossary/term/382>

[3] <http://napwa.org.au/glossary/term/188>

[4] <http://www.ashm.org.au>

[5] [http://napwa.org.au/files/Simon O'Connor SPEECH.pdf](http://napwa.org.au/files/Simon%20O'Connor%20SPEECH.pdf)

[6] [http://napwa.org.au/files/Ita Buttrose SPEECH.pdf](http://napwa.org.au/files/Ita%20Buttrose%20SPEECH.pdf)