



Living Positive Victoria stresses facts over speculation to seroconversion during Victoria PrEP-X Study

For immediate release

23 May 2017 – The recent news of a Melbournian becoming HIV positive during the Victorian PrEP-X study is a situation that requires the promotion of facts over speculation.

"We don't know how HIV transmission has occurred and it's unwise to speculate," said Brent Allan, CEO of Living Positive Victoria. "Speculation leads to gossip and rumours which do nothing more than fuel HIV stigma. Anyone who tests HIV positive, regardless of the circumstances, deserves compassion, care and dignity and their right to privacy must be respected."

Approximately 3000 Victorians have enrolled in the PrEP-X research study. The study, started in 2016, investigates the role of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) in reducing new HIV transmissions and is part of a number of medical trials around the world. PrEP is a medication taken by HIV negative people and has been shown to reduce HIV transmission by up to 99 per cent.

"PrEP has demonstrated to be one of the most effective technologies to prevent HIV acquisition," said Allan. "Thousands of people would be HIV positive today if PrEP had not been made available. We continue to support the research and the PrEP-X study in hopes that this medication will be accessible to all Australians in the near future."

To date, the vast majority HIV transmission cases that have occurred in Australia are a result of a person being unaware they are HIV positive or a person living with HIV and has had difficulty adhering to their anti-retroviral medication for any number of reasons.

"Knowing your HIV status and adherence to anti-retroviral therapy, if you are living with HIV, are the critical and vital steps to reducing the number of HIV transmissions."

Since 1988 Living Positive Victoria has been committed to the advancement of the human rights and wellbeing of all people living with, and affected by HIV.

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