



## **ALERT FOR CLINICIANS**

### **Increase in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) notifications among Aboriginal people**

#### **KEY POINTS**

- HIV notifications have increased among Aboriginal people in WA in the year to date.
- Consider opportunistic HIV screening when offering testing for sexually transmissible infections (STI) or blood-borne viruses (BBV) to Aboriginal patients.

#### **Background**

- In WA, there has been a recent increase in HIV notifications among Aboriginal people despite the overall number of HIV notifications having almost halved from 104 cases in 2019 to 55 cases in 2021.
- In the year to date, six (6) Aboriginal people have been notified with HIV in WA, which is double the annual historical five-year average of three (3) notifications per year. These cases reside in the metropolitan, regional and remote areas.
- A range of risk factors were reported including heterosexual contact, men who have sex with men (MSM) and injecting drug use.

#### **Advice for clinicians**

- Consider opportunistic HIV testing when screening patients for STIs or BBVs, with appropriate pre-test counselling. Remember to include syphilis serology.
- Ensure that patient prevention education opportunities include:
  - safer sex practices including consistent condom use
  - safer injecting behaviours
  - information and referral to services for HIV pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis
- Contact tracing assistance can be provided by your local public health unit if required.

#### **Resources for clinicians**

- The WA STI/BBV guidelines provide information on testing, treatment, HIV pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis and patient education, counselling and prevention resources:  
<http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Silverbook>
- Contacts for specialist advice on HIV can be accessed at  
[http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Silverbook/Contacts-for specialist-advice-on-STIs-and-HIV](http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Silverbook/Contacts-for-specialist-advice-on-STIs-and-HIV)

#### **Notification of cases**

- Please notify confirmed cases of HIV using the notification form available at:  
<https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Files/Corporate/general-documents/communicable-diseases/PDF/HIV-Notification-form.pdf>

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Access Clinician Alerts online at: [https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/F\\_I/Health-alerts-infectious-diseases](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/F_I/Health-alerts-infectious-diseases)