



Media Release – 4 March 2008

HIV Screening for Pregnant Women to Begin in Auckland Region

Counties Manukau, Auckland and Waitemata District Health Boards are pleased to announce the commencement of training sessions on Antenatal HIV Screening to start in March 2008.

The aim of screening is to identify HIV infection in pregnant women. Since 2000 approximately 14 children in New Zealand have contracted HIV because it was undetected during pregnancy in their mothers.

If women are diagnosed and treated in pregnancy, the risk of vertical transmission to the baby can be reduced from (up to) 30% to less than 1%. In fact no babies have been born in New Zealand to identified HIV positive women who have been appropriately treated in pregnancy. There are also benefits to the mother for early detection of HIV, with new treatments improving life expectancy and quality of life.

Training sessions are being provided to ensure all health care professionals are updated on the need to routinely offer and recommend an HIV test along with the first antenatal bloods with each pregnancy.

Three Auckland HIV coordinators will work together to educate health care professionals on the specifics of the policy change. Training sessions will cover the screening pathways and guidelines for reactive and confirmed positive results and the support systems in place for health professionals and for HIV positive women within the Auckland and Northland areas as well as to answer any questions people may have.

HIV screening in pregnancy is something we want to be considered as part of normal practice. Pregnant woman can expect to be offered an HIV test along with their first antenatal bloods as training rolls out this year.

For more information please

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