



MEDIA RELEASE

5 DECEMBER 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW CAMPAIGN TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT LGBTIQ CERVICAL SCREENING

A new social media campaign aims to keep LGBTIQ communities talking about the importance of regular cervical screening. *LGBTIQ&A: Your questions, answered by The Inner Circle* is the second phase of the successful *The Inner Circle* campaign, launched earlier this year by NSW's leading LGBTI health organisation, ACON.

The Inner Circle campaign and website focuses on raising awareness about the changes to the National Cervical Screening Program, encourages all people with a cervix to get screened, and addresses some of the barriers LGBTIQ people may face in accessing testing. Funded by a Cancer Screening and Prevention grant from Cancer Institute NSW, the campaign is one of very few in the world that recognises the diversity of people who have a cervix, and is inclusive of trans and gender diverse people.

"We know that people in our communities often face barriers when accessing health care and that the Cervical Screening Test – which has replaced the Pap test – can be particularly daunting. The first phase of the campaign was about addressing those barriers and getting people talking about cervical cancer prevention," ACON Deputy CEO Karen Price said.

"Now we're focusing on making sure our communities have the knowledge they need to understand the test, the reasons behind the changes to the National Cervical Screening Program, and how important it is to stay up to date with screening."

Educating communities about the changes to the national program is an important priority for the Cancer Institute NSW, says Sarah McGill, Director of Cancer Screening and Prevention.

"The new Cervical Screening Test is a much more accurate than the old Pap Test, as it looks for the presence of HPV – human papilloma virus – which causes 99.7% of cervical cancers. Since we're looking for the source of the cellular changes that can lead to cancer, we'll be catching potential problems much earlier. This means the time between screening has been extended from every two years to every five years for those who don't have HPV.

"These changes can be really confusing for some people – particularly the idea that the new test is more accurate, which means we can test less often," McGill said. "We know that accurate information and sharing knowledge is one of the most powerful ways we can reduce anxiety about testing and encourage people to take control of their health."

The new campaign features 10 short videos which will be released through ACON's social media pages across December and into January.

ACON sourced frequently asked questions about cervical screening directly from the community, including from clients at Check OUT: LGBTIQ+ Sexual Health Clinic. Run in partnership with Family Planning NSW with funding from a CINSW grant, Check OUT opened earlier this year and provides cervical screening and HIV/STI testing for LGBTIQ people.

Following on from the first phase of the campaign, which featured community members talking about their experiences of cervical screening, *LGBTIQ&A* features a diverse range of people answering FAQs direct to camera, providing clear answers to questions and concerns about cervical screening.

"We know how well our community responds to positive, diverse representation and there's a sense of trust and community connectedness when you see someone who looks like you, or looks like someone you love, answering questions about a health issue that affects so many of us," Price added. "Using community talent really emphasises one of the key messages of the campaign – to talk to each other, share knowledge, and take care of each other."

For more information about cervical screening for LGBTIQ people, visit the Inner Circle: www.theinnercircle.org.au

Check OUT: LGBTIQ+ Sexual Health Clinic is open every Tuesday, from 12pm-8pm, and is staffed by LGBTIQ+ peer workers and expert sexual health nurses from Family Planning NSW: www.checkout.org.au

The video can be seen [here](#).

ENDS

For more information please contact: David Alexander, ACON Media and Communications
E: dalexander@acon.org.au T: +61 (02) 9206 2044 M: +61 (0)428 477 042