

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Western Sydney health networks beating diabetes together**

Organisations across western Sydney are working together to combat one of the region's greatest health challenges. WentWest, the Western Sydney Primary Health Network has joined forces with Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD), Diabetes NSW & ACT and PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, under the Western Sydney Diabetes banner to explore new innovations to assist with early detection and intervention of type 2 diabetes. This National Diabetes Week (8-15 July), Diabetes Australia's 'It's About Time' campaign aims to increase awareness of how early diagnosis and treatment can help save lives.

With over half of the population at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, Western Sydney Diabetes (WSD) has introduced routine HbA1c testing as part of all pathology requests in both Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital (BMDH) emergency departments with the aim of diagnosing patients with pre-diabetes or diabetes. In 20 months, 48,000 patients have been tested with 17% being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and 30% being pre-diabetic\*.

Due to the success of this strategy, diabetes testing in general practice has been trialled in 11 GP practices across western Sydney. During June, data was collected from 10 of these practices and the results are similar to BMDH testing, with 17% of GP-tested patients having type 2 diabetes and a further 27% being diagnosed with pre-diabetes\*.

"These results are frighteningly high, proving that western Sydney is a hot spot for type 2 diabetes and highlights the importance of early detection and prevention. WentWest, along with our partners is committed to seeking out innovative new methods and education programs to reduce the impact upon our community of such a serious chronic disease," says Western Sydney PHN CEO, Walter Kmet.

The Western Sydney Primary Health Network (WSPHN), is committed to supporting both consumers and health professionals across western Sydney and have established the Diabetes Support Group along with introducing diabetes education into their Practice Nurse Education program. To learn more about their diabetes programs and services available please visit [www.wentwest.com.au](http://www.wentwest.com.au)

\*Source Western Sydney Diabetes 2018

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**About WentWest**

WentWest's focus on providing better health care in the community was strengthened with its appointment as a Tranche 1 Medicare Local in July 2011 to now operating as the Western Sydney Primary Health Network. WentWest has built on its experience as a Division of General Practice in supporting GPs and their practices, connecting health services to meet local needs, and striving for better health outcomes for western Sydney.

The population living in western Sydney is culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse, and we also have the largest urban Aboriginal community in Australia. WentWest works closely with doctors, allied health professionals, the Western Sydney Local Health District and many others to improve the coordination of local health services for patients and their families.