** Media release**

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**Australia’s first STI Testing Week website tailored for multicultural communities**

STI Testing Week | October 17-23, 2021 | wwwtalktesttreat.org.au

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STI Testing Week is an annual campaign initiated by the Victorian Department of Health (DoH) to highlight the importance of regular STI testing and positive sexual health practices.

The public awareness campaign will focus on encouraging people to re-engage with primary care and get a sexual health test at least every 12 months in spite of the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

To address cultural and language issues across all aspects of STIs, the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health’s (CEH) Multicultural Health and Support Service (MHSS) has developed Australia’s first and only dedicated STI Testing Week website tailored specifically for Victoria’s multicultural communities. It includes plain language and in-language information for community members, as well as resources and social media assets to help health workers with conversations about sexual health with clients from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The Department of Health’s Director of Public Health, Maria Bubnic said with Victorians set to have many restrictions eased, “we want them to celebrate the love, pleasure and joy that is sex, but not STIs. Getting tested and treated is what STI Week is all about.”

In addition to the Department led campaign, the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health’s (CEH) Multicultural Health and Support Service (MHSS) is leading messaging for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. The campaign seeks to reduce stigma by normalising discussion about sexual health, as well as testing and treatment, with the focus on reaching sexually active young people and adults, and women who are planning a family.

CEH will primarily be targeting vulnerable communities, for example those born in the Pacific Islands, African communities, the Philippines and North East Asian communities.

“It is estimated that around one in every six people will get an STI in their life – and most won’t even know it. That’s why getting regular sexual health tests is so important,” Ms Bubnic said.

STIs disproportionately impact a number of our refugee and migrant communities. This population encompass a broad range of people who may experience barriers, for example, language, stigma, cost and lack of awareness, to accessing sexual health services.

The campaign will include ethnic radio announcements in Tamil, Cambodian (Khmer), Farsi, Dari and Tagalog, and social media assets to address increases in STIs – including syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia. It will provide at-risk Victorians, from migrant and refugee backgrounds, with information on when, where and how to get tested and seek treatment.

For more information about CEH’s new STI Testing Week website go to [talktesttreat.org.au](http://www.talktesttreat.org.au)

For more information about STI Testing Week go to [STI testing week - Better Health Channel](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/sti)

**Media inquiries:**

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**ABOUT**Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health (CEH)

CEH a unique agency offering expertise in cultural diversity and health, education and training, cultural competence, social marketing, cross-cultural communication and consumer participation.

It assists organisations to provide a high quality of service to clients from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Clients include hospitals, government departments, local councils, health centres, community services and higher education providers.

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