



## CLINICAL SERVICES

### HIV ANTIBODY TESTING: POLICY

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Approval: August 2005  
Next Review: August 2007

## 1. Policy statement

The Victorian Health Act (1953) mandates that a person undergoing HIV antibody test is given information about the medical and social consequences of being tested and the possible result of the test. In accordance with this, clients of Melbourne Sexual Health Centre undertaking HIV antibody testing will be provided with HIV pre and post test counselling.

## 2. Persons affected

- Medical Officers (MO)
- Sexual Health Nurses (SHN's) who are of 'prescribed class' and are accredited in the provision of HIV pre and post test counselling.

## 3. Definition of terms

- HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus.
- HIV Antibody Testing: Examination of blood to detect the presence of antibodies to HIV.

## 4. Responsibility

- Medical Services Manager
- Nursing Services Manager
- Medical Officers (MO)
- Sexual Health Nurses (SHN'S)

## 5. Criteria

In accordance with the Victorian Health Act (1952) S127(1);

"A registered medical practitioner must not carry out... a test for HIV on a person who requests it of him or her... unless the registered medical practitioner has... given information about the medical and social consequences of being tested and the possible results of the test to a person who request it."

For non medical practitioners to provide HIV antibody testing (i.e. Sexual Health Nurses)

"A registered medical practitioner must not... authorise the carrying out of a test for HIV...unless the medical practitioner...is satisfied that a person of a prescribed class has given information about the medical and social consequences of being tested and the possible results of the test to the person who requests it."

Where for the purposes of sections 127 of the Health Act, as outlined in the Victorian Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations (2001), a person of prescribed class is

- a) "a person who at the commencement of these Regulations has had experience for at least 2 years in counselling in relation to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus antibody test"; or
- b) "a person who has successfully completed a course approved by the Secretary in pre-test and post-test counselling in relation to the Human Immunodeficiency Virus antibody test."

## 6. Reference documents (which may be referred to)

Anderson, P; Fethers, K; McCoy, R; Harvey, P and Spencer, J (2001) Talking about testing: pre-test and post-test counselling. In Dore, G; Grulich, A; Hoy, J; Kidd, M; McCoy, R; Mijch, A and Strasser, S. (Eds) (2001) HIV/Viral hepatitis: a guide for primary care. Australasian Society for HIV Medicine Inc. Ch. 8: pp 63-70. [www.ashm.org.au](http://www.ashm.org.au)

Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents; available at [www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au](http://www.dms.dpc.vic.gov.au)

Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations (2001) Version No.005. Incorporating amendments as at 26 January 2005.

Health Act (1958) Version No.102 incorporating amendments as at 1 July 2004.