

Spring 2018

## What should you know about My Health Record?

It is very important that every person with a Medicare card understands the basics of My Health Record before 31 January 2019 so they can make a decision about whether to opt out of the system or stay in.

My Health Record (MHR) is a digital (online) record relating to your health and can include information such as prescriptions, doctors' records and other test results. What it means is that instead of having medical records with all your doctors and prescription records at various pharmacies and so on, all the information will be in one central online location managed by you and accessible to authorised health professionals and non-clinical administrators who are looking after your health.

As with most systems there are both pros and cons. For example all your health information could now be held in one place. This would be beneficial to people with chronic conditions who find it difficult to keep track of which doctors they have seen and which medications they are on. It is also Australia wide so is useful for people who travel between states and need to share health information with health professionals in different states. Other people are concerned about potential breaches of data and privacy.

If you do not want a My Health Record you will need to opt out before 31 January 2019. After this date, a record will be automatically created for all people who don't already have one and who have not opted out.

To opt out you will need your Medicare number and some other form of ID such as licence or passport. It only takes a few minutes.

If you decide to stay, it is important to make sure you understand all the privacy settings so that you can manage who can see your record and decide what information you may want to have there.

You can opt out, get more information or manage your record at [www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/](http://www.myhealthrecord.gov.au/)

## Share your story

Many people tell Pozhet that they find it very difficult to disclose to a potential partner who is not living with HIV. They want to hear from sero-different heterosexual couples who have come through the disclosure stage and are willing to share their experiences.

Would you consider sharing your story with people at the Annual Workshop? The negative or positive partner can speak as an individual or you both can contribute.

Your experiences could help others successfully negotiate sero-different relationships.

If you think you might be interested give us a call at Pozhet to chat about it.



# Inter view

The Western Suburbs Haven in Blacktown provides a variety of services for people living with HIV and their partners and families. The Manager, Colleen Neville has kindly agreed to tell us more about what the Haven does.

**Hi Colleen, Could you tell us a little bit about the Haven and your role there?**

As the manager, one of my roles is to assist people living with HIV who visit the Haven. Sometimes people come in just for the social interaction, for a cuppa and a chat with myself, their peers or our volunteers. Sometimes people come in for a specific purpose such as help with accessing community services, housing, Centrelink, healthcare, general info, arranging transport, or help to access the computer and internet.

We run mostly on volunteer labour and these dedicated volunteers donate many hours to caring for our guests and service users and work hard fundraising, cooking, cleaning and driving, as well as attending to various other duties to make a difference to the lives of people living with HIV.

**Who can access these services?**

People Sydney-wide both infected and affected by HIV access our services. We also offer two bedrooms for respite and convalescence care and this service is available for people from across NSW.

## What is the Pantry service?

The Pantry service provides fresh food and groceries to people living with HIV at very discounted prices. You can also buy discounted cosmetic and toiletry items. Don't forget to bring a bag!



**I hear you also have a Friday lunch which is popular. Can people just turn up for lunch or should they let you know they are coming?**

Friday is The Haven's main drop-in day for lunch and HIV and social support. Generally, people just show up. We do ask groups to call the day or so before so that the volunteers know how many to cater for.

**Friday lunches consist of BBQs to homemade meals, dessert, tea and coffee, all for a small price of \$4.00**

We welcome people to come along for lunch and a chat, to meet some new people or to reconnect with others.

We can pick up and drop off at Blacktown station if you let us know you are coming as long as you call us before 11.40am. We also provide lunch for visitors on Mondays to Thursdays for a gold coin donation.

**Is there anything more you would like to tell people about this great service?**

Our opening hours are a general guide for those who regularly use our services, but for those who work or genuinely cannot come during these hours to shop we can occasionally organise something outside of regular hours.

If you're thinking about coming to the Haven for the first time, I ask that you give me a quick call to let me know. This way I can also tell whoever is in the office or the volunteers on duty to expect and welcome you if I won't be here. We do this to protect the privacy and confidentiality of those that use our services.

*Thanks Colleen.*

Pozhet holds some events at the Haven so keep your eyes on the website. Contact the Haven by calling 9672 3600 or visiting [thewesternsuburbshaven.com.au/](http://thewesternsuburbshaven.com.au/)

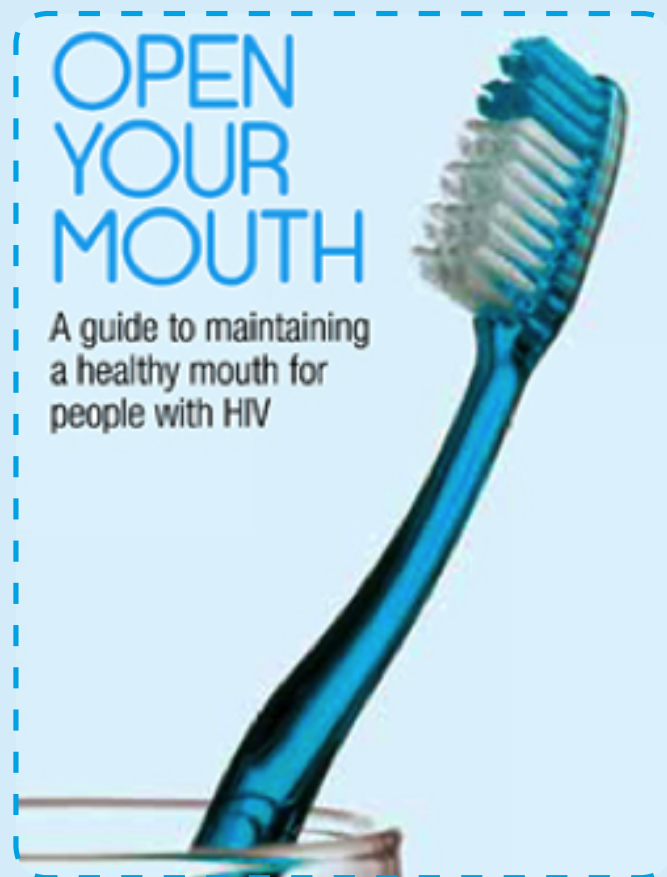


## Tips for keeping your mouth healthy

People living with HIV as with other chronic health conditions can have particular issues around oral health caused by treatments or by the condition itself. Learn how to take good care of your mouth, gums and teeth by having a read of Open your mouth by visiting the Living well with HIV section of the Pozhet website. This booklet provides details about keeping your whole mouth healthy. Taking good care of your teeth and gums now can help you avoid expensive dental treatment later on.

### General tips to have a healthy mouth

- Clean your teeth at least twice a day
- Clean between your teeth every day
- Have a dental check up every 6 months. You still need a dental check if you have dentures
- Drink mostly tap water throughout the day
- Avoid sugary and acidic foods and drinks
- Limit the number of snacks you eat
- Quit smoking



## The Pozhet Consumer Group needs two new members!

Pozhet is looking for two women to volunteer their time and expertise about living with HIV by joining the Pozhet Consumer Group (PCG). The PCG is a group of clients who meet regularly to advise Pozhet about issues for heterosexual people living with HIV. The group meets three times a year at the Marsden Street office and regional people can join in by phone. Pozhet covers travel expenses by providing a small gift card to everyone who participates.

Are you interested?

Contact Pozhet for more information.

## You are invited to the Pozhet Annual Workshop!

Pozhet is holding the 2018 Annual Workshop for heterosexual men and women living with HIV, partners and family on 17 November. The Annual Workshop is a great opportunity to stay informed about advances in HIV treatments and to learn more about living well with HIV. The 2018 Annual Workshop will be held in Parramatta at Jeffrey House (162 Marsden Street). The Clinic is closed on Saturdays so Pozhet will have the venue to itself. The Workshop always has a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and is a good way to meet other people.

*We hope to see you there on the day.*

## An undetectable viral load means no risk of transmission to partners



A person living with HIV is considered to have an 'undetectable' viral load when antiretroviral treatment has brought the level of virus in their body to such low levels that blood tests cannot detect it.

There is no risk of passing on HIV if your doctor has confirmed that you are undetectable, you continue taking your treatment and have your viral load checked regularly. Having an undetectable viral load means that people living with HIV can live long, healthy lives, have children and not pass on HIV to sexual partners.

## *Pozhet Spring Retreat – a great success!*

Twenty eight men and women living with HIV and four facilitators attended the Pozhet Spring Retreat on the second weekend in September. It was a larger than usual group but most who attended provided very positive feedback, particularly about the large group. The weekend had a balanced mix of education, group discussions and physical activities, including a raging camp fire on Saturday night. Everyone welcomed the opportunity to meet and chat to other people living with HIV from across New South Wales. All participants stated that they came away with a better understanding of HIV treatment and preventing transmission of HIV and what “Undetectable = Untransmittable” means. Thanks to everyone who contributed to making it one of best retreats yet. Thank you to South East Sydney HIV and Related Programs Team for partnering this event.

## Farewell and thanks to Richard Riley

Richard Riley has been co-facilitating the Pozhet Myuna Bay Retreat every year since 2009. The recent Spring Retreat was his last retreat as he is retiring from his job as senior social worker for the Hunter New England Local Health District. Pozhet and all the clients who have attended Myuna Bay over the years would like to extend a thank you to Richard for his dedication to working with people living with HIV. Richard’s knowledge and skills as a communicator and facilitator have helped build the Pozhet Retreats and make them the success they are today. He has been a tireless advocate for heterosexual people living with HIV, their partners and family.

*Thank you Richard. You will be missed! We wish you every success in your new endeavours. Have fun!*



*From left to right. Maxine Lewis (Pozhet), Richard Riley (Hunter New England Local Health District), Leo Baretto (HIV Outreach Team, South East Sydney Local Health District) and Susan McGuckin (Pozhet)*