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New HIV diagnoses continue to rise in New Zealand

2016 sees the highest number of HIV diagnoses ever recorded

- The total number of diagnoses in 2016 (244) is higher than in 2015 (224)
- Gay and bisexual men remain most at risk of HIV in New Zealand
- 159 out of 244 diagnosed with HIV are gay or bisexual men
- An estimated 3500 people were living with HIV in New Zealand at the end of 2016

Latest figures released by the University of Otago's AIDS Epidemiology Group show that rates of new HIV transmission continue to rise with 2016 seeing the highest number of diagnoses ever recorded in New Zealand. Numbers have been steadily rising since 2011, signalling a growing public health concern for New Zealand.

According to the New Zealand AIDS Foundation, it is possible to end the transmission of HIV in New Zealand by 2025 but this goal will only be achieved with urgent, sophisticated and coordinated efforts at scale. This will involve continuing condom promotion, making pre-exposure prophylaxis available to people at highest risk of HIV, scaled-up testing and providing immediate treatment to people newly diagnosed.

"The rising rate of new HIV infections should be a clarion call to action for all people working in and impacted by HIV in New Zealand," says Jason Myers, NZAF Executive Director. "In an increasingly complex HIV prevention environment, we must mount the most sophisticated attack that we can. The world of HIV prevention has been revolutionised in recent years and the time to act is now if we are to gain the maximum benefit possible from new opportunities."

Aside from the significant human cost of every new HIV infection, it costs the country an estimated \$800,000 to care for someone over their lifetime living with HIV. The annual cost of treating HIV has doubled over the past 5 years to \$32 million and this will continue to rise if we cannot halt new diagnoses.

For further comment please contact:

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