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THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES



NACCHO
National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

Joint Media Release

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Working together to fight sexually transmitted infections in Aboriginal communities

Aboriginal people and communities will benefit from a new partnership ensuring they have access to the latest research findings on sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

A landmark Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the peak body for Aboriginal medical services, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the National Centre in HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research (NCHECR) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW).

NCHECR has national responsibilities in the coordination of epidemiological surveillance and clinical trials related to HIV and hepatitis C in Australia. Over recent years the centre has become increasingly involved in projects related to sexually transmitted infections and has developed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Program.

"This MOU will also help Aboriginal Medical Services in the delivery of sexual health and blood borne viruses programs through cooperation with NCHECR and having access to their expertise in workforce development, training and mentoring for NACCHO's Sexual Health Policy Officer and Sexual Health Program Coordinators," said Dr Mick Adams, chair of NACCHO.

"Many Aboriginal communities face high rates of STIs that can cause discomfort and shame, as well as serious complications such as infertility, but also increase the risk of HIV infection," said Professor John Kaldor, the Deputy Director of NCHECR at UNSW. "A partnership is an essential step in undertaking research with Aboriginal communities."

The MOU includes a range of principles concerning collection, use and ownership of data and promotes collaborative research and the development of a comprehensive evidence base to guide policy.

The MOU was signed in Sydney on May 1 by Dr Adams, NACCHO CEO Dea Thiele and Professor Les Field Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) UNSW and Professor John Kaldor Deputy Director, NCHECR at UNSW.

A new consultative body will meet at least once every six months to discuss issues and review progress under the MOU. NCHECR will regularly report to the NACCHO board on activities coming under the MOU.

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