Get in touch with your liver

Community Health Services at Sydney Local Health District are joining forces with the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre for Hepatitis Awareness Week (21-28 July, 2013) with an event on Friday, 26 July.

The event at the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre will include information stalls, a healthy lunch and a speaker who will talk about their experience of living with hepatitis. There will also be a week-long (22-26 July) display in the foyer of RPA Hospital.

Hepatitis is a virus that can cause liver disease if left untreated. More than 600,000 people currently live with either chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C in Australia.

The acting general manager of Community Health at the District, Miranda Shaw, said the week was the perfect opportunity to raise awareness and educate the community about hepatitis and treatment options.

"Hepatitis C is spread through blood-to-blood contact while hepatitis B is spread through both blood-to-blood contact and the exchange of bodily fluids," Ms Shaw said.

"While a vaccine exists for hepatitis B; it does not for hepatitis C. There have, however, been several breakthroughs in the last year for the treatment of hepatitis C.

"In addition to treatment, ongoing assessment is very important for people living with hepatitis C. This means having regular blood tests with the GP to check your health, especially liver function. A new test, similar to an ultrasound, is also now available to assess if cirrhosis (bad liver damage) is present." Ms Shaw said.

The programs manager at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Ken Saunders, said the centre was proud to partner with Community Health.

"Working together, we can reach many more members of the community and spread the message to have a check-up and learn more about treatment," Mr Saunders said.

"At the centre we run a number of programs to assist disadvantaged and vulnerable community members, including weekly computer classes, shopping services, low-cost counselling and much more," he said.

Event details:

- 12:30-1:30pm, Friday, 26 July, 2013 at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Australia Street, Newtown.

For more information, please contact Caline Haddad from Sydney Local Health District on 9515 9607 or at caline.haddad@ss wahs.nsw.gov.au