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napwha national association of
people with HIV australia



MEDIA RELEASE
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Australia signs on to global U=U declaration for HIV

Australia has become the fourth country to sign on to the Multinational Undetectable=Untransmittable (U=U) Call-To-Action, marking a major milestone in the country's response to HIV.

'U=U' refers to the fact that when a person living with HIV is on effective antiretroviral treatment for HIV, they will reach an 'undetectable' viral load and will be unable to transmit the virus to sexual partners.

Signing on to the Call-To-Action means embedding its nine strategies and U=U in the country's HIV response.

At an event on Tuesday evening, the Hon Mark Butler MP, federal Minister for Health and Aged Care, said becoming a signatory was an important reflection of Australia's approach to HIV.

"Australia has a reputation as a leader in the HIV response, and we've always taken an evidence-based, community-led stance," said Minister Butler.

"We are confident that embedding U=U into our approach to HIV will accelerate progress towards national and global goals to end the HIV epidemic," he said.

Bruce Richman, Founding Executive Director of the Prevention Access Campaign (PAC) which launched the U=U campaign in 2016, welcomed Australia as a signatory to the Call-To-Action.

"Australia has already set a very high bar when it comes to ensuring the community response to HIV and the healthcare workforce are working in tandem to achieve the best possible outcomes for people living with HIV," said Mr Richman.

"Becoming a signatory to the declaration will ensure the principles of U=U are integrated into the country's HIV response, and that communities continue to lead the way," he said.

"PAC and the U=U campaign are delighted that Australia has officially signed onto this declaration, setting the example as a world leader in the HIV response and being community led. We congratulate HEM, NAPWHA and ASHM along with the Australian Health Minister Mark Butler for making this happen."

Alexis Apostolellis, CEO of ASHM, said becoming a signatory to the Call-To-Action will further empower Australia's HIV healthcare workforce.

"The U=U message allows healthcare workers to give people living with HIV confidence and agency over their sexual health and wellbeing. We applaud the government's commitment to formally endorsing U=U, which will ultimately help us work towards the virtual elimination of HIV transmission," said Mr Apostolellis.

Scott Harlum, President of the National Association of People with HIV Australia (NAPWHA) said the announcement continues Australia's commitment to centring people living with HIV in the response.



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“People living with HIV accessing treatment and becoming undetectable is core to any strategy to eradicate HIV, so we wholeheartedly welcome the news of Australia becoming an official signatory to U=U,” said Mr Harlum.

Dash Heath-Paynter, CEO of Health Equity Matters (formerly the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations) applauded the government’s ongoing leadership on HIV.

“The foundation of Australia’s success in preventing HIV is the strong bonds between community, government, clinicians and researchers. Minister Butler’s decision to champion U=U is exactly the sort of leadership that will propel us forward and accelerate virtual elimination of HIV transmission” said Mr Heath-Paynter.

Australian healthcare workers can find out more about U=U and how to embed it in their practice with the ASHM’s U=U Guidance for Healthcare Professionals at <https://ashm.org.au/resources/uu-ashm-guidance-for-healthcare-professionals/>

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About the Multinational Undetectable=Untransmittable (U=U) Call-To-Action

This call-to-action urges all nations to support the evidence-based U=U message and incorporate U=U into national efforts to prevent, diagnose, and treat HIV. The Call-To-Action outlines nine strategies for U=U integration:

1. To develop national strategies for sustainable and effective national U=U programs that are informed by the communities and individuals most impacted.
2. To integrate U=U science into HIV guidelines and official communications.
3. To implement policies to address inequities, decrease barriers, and increase access to treatment, care, and diagnostics.
4. To include U=U as a mandatory component of existing HIV prevention, care, and treatment research, services, policies, and programs.
5. To use U=U in health education and promotion efforts to generate demand and increase utilisation of testing, prevention, care, and related services.
6. To conduct U=U awareness campaigns for key populations and the general public to decrease stigma.
7. To improve access to and uptake of HIV treatment and viral load testing to ensure equitable access to the benefits of U=U.
8. To recognize U=U as a primary HIV prevention method and/or adopt combination prevention strategies that prioritise prompt diagnosis, linkage to care, and treatment adherence support for people living with HIV.
9. To train, support, and require the HIV prevention and care workforce, including clinicians, peers, and other support professionals to deliver accurate and concise U=U messages during service delivery.

About ASHM

ASHM is a peak professional body representing healthcare professionals working in HIV, BBV, and sexual and reproductive health. We partner without prejudice, working collaboratively to develop workforce capacity and strengthen health systems to uphold the dignity and rights of people facing stigma and barriers to care.