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HIV scare after Australian health worker diagnosed with virus

SYDNEY: Australian authorities were yesterday urging 399 people in eastern Victoria state to have an HIV test after a health care worker was diagnosed with the virus that causes AIDS.

The Victorian Department of Health said it had conducted a thorough investigation and was following up with selected patients who had contact with the worker in the unnamed region.

"This is entirely precautionary as there are no reports of any patient contracting HIV from the

health care worker," it said in a statement.

"But we are erring on the side of caution and recommending a blood test to rule out the presence of HIV."

One woman, who spoke on public radio without giving her full name, said she had felt "very sick in the stomach" after receiving a letter from the health department urging her to have a test.

"I don't know where I (may have) got it because it's all very secret at the moment," she said. — AFP