The Narrowest Point: Hepatitis C in Remand

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE

Reduce the rate of hepatitis C infection or re-infection in the broader correctional space.

OPPORTUNITY

Hepatitis Queensland (HQ) strategised that testing and treating prisoners living with hepatitis C in the contained remand space of corrections 'the narrowest point' would reduce the onward transmission of hepatitis C infections entering the broader correctional space and the community.

By recognising Remand as the entry point into the custodial space and focusing on testing and treatment in this area, we believed that we could reduce the number of people with HCV entering into the broader and more complex management environment of correctional facilities.

PROJECT LOCATION

- Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre
- Privately operated high security remand centre
- Location: Wacol Brisbane
- 1200 male only inmates
- Time in Remand: up to 2 years pending movement
- % of population with HCV: approximately 30%

CHALLENGES

With no centralised health service for Queensland's correctional centres, prison health services remain the responsibility of the local hospital and health services (HSS). This translates to significant variations in the uptake of hepatitis C treatment and a range of unique models of care across Queensland.

The process of HQ gaining regular access to enter the medical centre in AGCC took longer than anticipated but was achieved through determination and collaboration from both parties.

Data transfer to follow the prisoners journey remains an ongoing issue due to a current lack of a streamlined process.

SOLUTION

HQ developed a fortnightly nurse led model at AGCC to provide:

- Screening of self identified prisoners
- Clinically manage those with positive serology
- Provision of Fibroscan
- Appropriate referral to treatment
- Data and care continuity strategies
- Evaluation of outcomes

EARLY OUTCOMES

In the first 1.5 days of operation the project screened 15 prisoners. 8 were identified as HCV RNA positive with remainder pending blood results at the time of writing absract. This represents 53% of prisoners in custody currently screened as requiring treatment.

CONTACT DETAILS

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