

ICHAT. EVALUATION OF AN INNOVATIVE NURSE LED PRIMARY HEALTH MODEL OF CARE FOR PATIENTS WITH HEPATITIS C IN INNER CITY SYDNEY

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Background: The Integrated Community-based Hepatitis Assessment and Treatment (iCHAT) project aims to increase the number of people treated for chronic hepatitis C (HCV) in community and non-specialist settings funded through the Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network and managed by the HIV and Related Program Unit at South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, the program implemented a nurse led model of care to directly engage with and support General Practitioners and other non-specialist health providers. This presentation will provide an overview of the methodology, analysis of key outcomes and provide recommendations for scaling up the program.

Analysis: The project has resulted in an increase in the number of GPs prescribing HCV treatments with an additional 12 primary health care providers providing treatment. Prior to the program, these GPs reported they weren't prescribing and they were unlikely to have commenced treatment without the involvement of the project.

Outcomes: Key project outcomes include: 25 direct engagements with primary health care providers with 48 GPs attending targeted educational sessions; 21 presentations to GP training sessions, staff in-service training and community events; 12 services formalising partnerships with the program, 321 individual client assessments; 73 people identified as living with chronic HCV; 38 people commenced treatment with only 11 people requiring referral to specialist services.

Conclusion: Evaluation data from participating GPs demonstrates that the program provides an essential support service for GPs interested in treating HCV. Despite this, the challenge remains to encourage more GPs to become involved.

Based on the experience of the project, efforts to engage GPs in HCV treatment are best focused on those who have shown some interest but are not currently treating, and targeting GPs where there may be a need for greater support such as shortly after HCV notification has been made. These two strategies produced the best results in terms of engagement.

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