

PROMPT – POINT OF CARE TESTING FOR HEPATITIS C IN THE PRIORITY SETTINGS OF MENTAL HEALTH, PRISONS AND DRUG & ALCOHOL FACILITIES

Ralton L¹, McCartney EM¹, Ferguson C¹, Dawe J², Richmond J², Tse E¹, Wigg A³, Cock V⁴, T Rees⁵, D Shaw¹ on behalf of the EC Australia partnership.

¹Royal Adelaide Hospital, ²Burnet Institute, ³Flinders Medical Center, ⁴Drug & Alcohol Services South Australia, ⁵Communicable Disease Control Branch, SA Health.

Background: A key barrier to hepatitis C (HCV) diagnosis and treatment is the multi-stage process of conventional testing that requires multiple visits to pathology services and healthcare providers to obtain a HCV antibody (Ab) test, HCV RNA test, diagnosis, be linked into care and commence treatment. PROMPt aims to overcome critical roadblocks to HCV treatment in the community by providing HCV point-of-care testing (POCT) and direct referral into treatment at the priority settings of mental health, prisons, and alcohol & other drugs (AOD) services.

Description of model of care/intervention: Participants are offered POC HCV diagnostic testing using SD Bioline® fingerstick Ab assay and those returning a positive HCV Ab result are offered a Cepheid® finger stick HCV RNA Xpert assay. Project staff, including peer support workers, provide HCV education, pre- and post-test counselling, and linkage to care at the time of diagnosis.

Effectiveness: To date, 729 participants have been recruited at three priority settings with recruitment ongoing for 12 months. **Primary endpoints:** 1. Number/proportion of participants who receive rapid POCT HCV Ab plus POC RNA. HCV Ab/RNA positivity at each site 2. Number/proportion of HCV RNA positive participants who are linked to care. **Secondary endpoints:** 1. Acceptability of HCV POCT to participants in each setting.

Conclusion and next steps: PROMPt aims to evaluate the effect of POCT on HCV testing rates and linkage to care, and explore the acceptability of HCV POCT in facilities and services for individuals at high risk of HCV infection.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: The Eliminate Hepatitis C Australia Partnership is funded through the Paul Ramsay Foundation with support from the Burnet Institute. The funding body was not involved in the project design, data collection, interpretation or analysis or manuscript production.