

MODEL ADDRESSING HEPATITIS C- AN EPIDEMIC THAT IMPACTS PWID

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Background:

HCMSG was founded in 2011 to address the lack of awareness, education and supportive services for people affected by Hepatitis C (HCV), Co-infected with HIV.

Description of model of care/intervention:

HCMSG, a community based organization (CBO), has been successful in reaching and impacting patients and providers nationwide through our flagship program model. We conduct a diverse array of programming geared towards enhancing the degree to which patients, community based service providers and healthcare providers can manage and treat. Our work mainly involves people who use drugs and framing educational groups around programs such as syringe exchanges in response to the connection between HCV and injection drug use.

Effectiveness:

We've trained 1,000+ facilitators who in turn have created these model groups in their own communities. In the last 2 years these trainings have been performed in over 25 states in the U.S. reaching both urban and rural settings.

We give the provider the understanding of how and why patients who don't abstain from drug use, can and should be treated with respect for HCV without leaving patients feeling disconnected, misunderstood and stigmatized. This comes from the experiences of a patient cured of HCV and a mother who lost her son from overdose. The Circle addresses the needs of all people affected by HCV and co-infected with HIV. The idea of a circle gives people a sense of belonging without judgement. It has been shown to effectively reduce the harm by addressing individuals' non-medical issues where they are provided with hygiene safety kits, education and supportive services. We encourage them to be tested and provide linkage to care.

Conclusion and next steps:

CBOs are able to make an impact with patients and providers. These programs provide the knowledge and tools to enable participants to continue this work in their own communities.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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