

THE NURSES ROLE WHEN THE HEPATITIS C IS CURED BUT THE CIRRHOSIS REMAINS

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Background

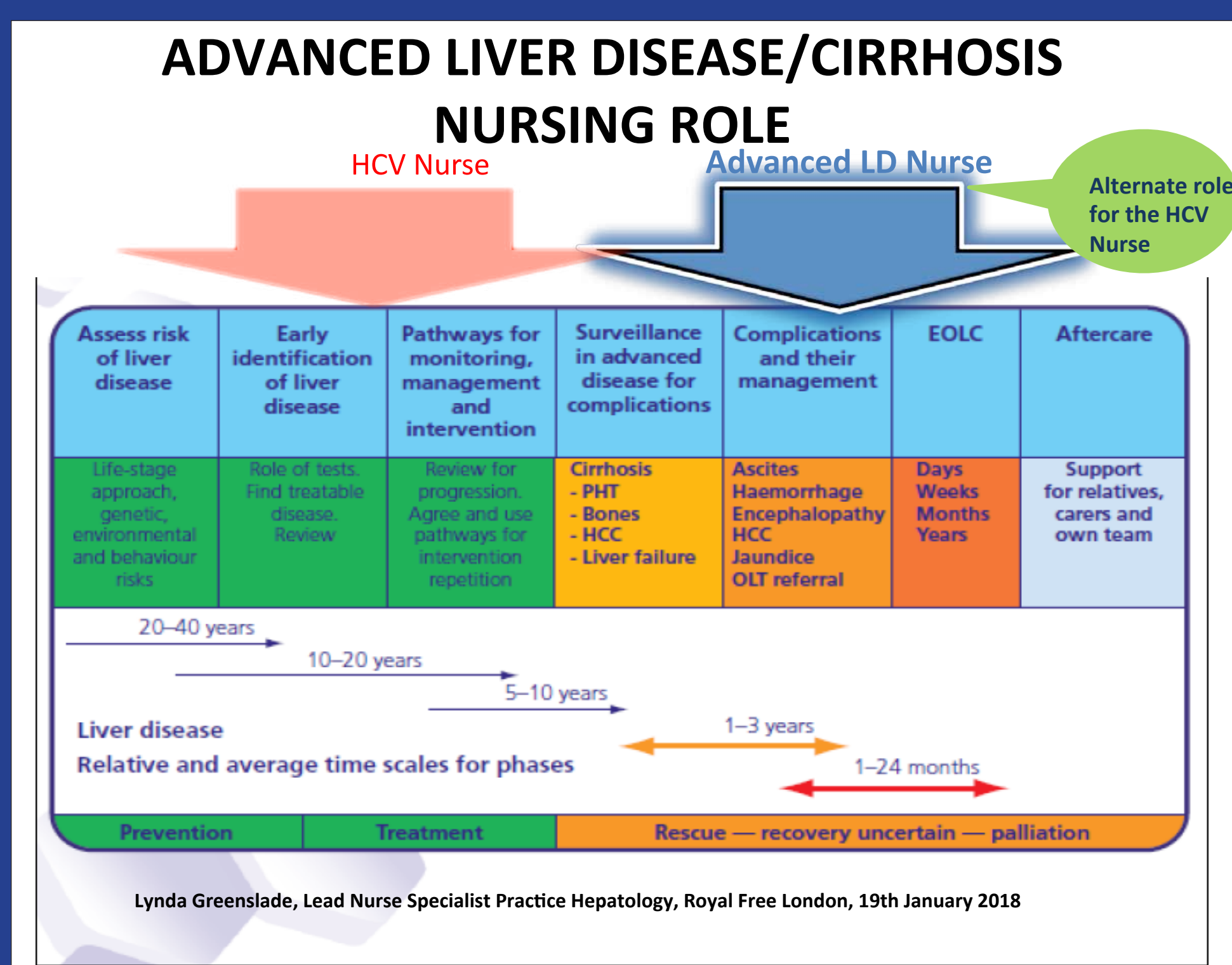
Chronic liver disease can result in progression to cirrhosis and liver failure. This can be difficult to manage as it involves multiple organ systems and complex pathophysiology. It is a major cause of premature death, poor quality of life and hospital readmissions. Given the complexity, nurses could play a key role in managing these patients. However, despite the growing burden of liver disease, improvements in therapies such as hepatitis C and nurse led models of care, the number of endorsed hepatology related courses available to nurses remains low.

Analysis/Argument

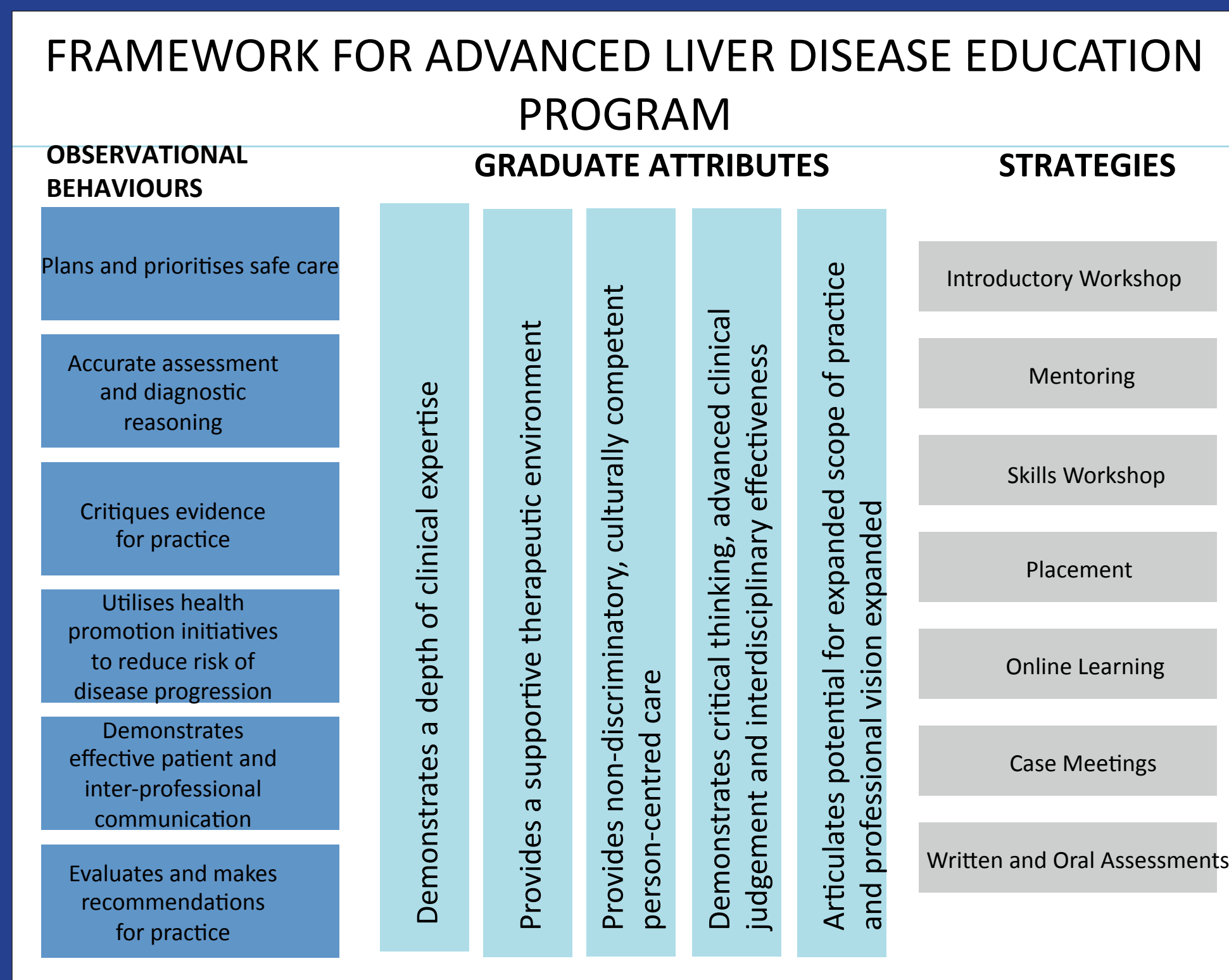
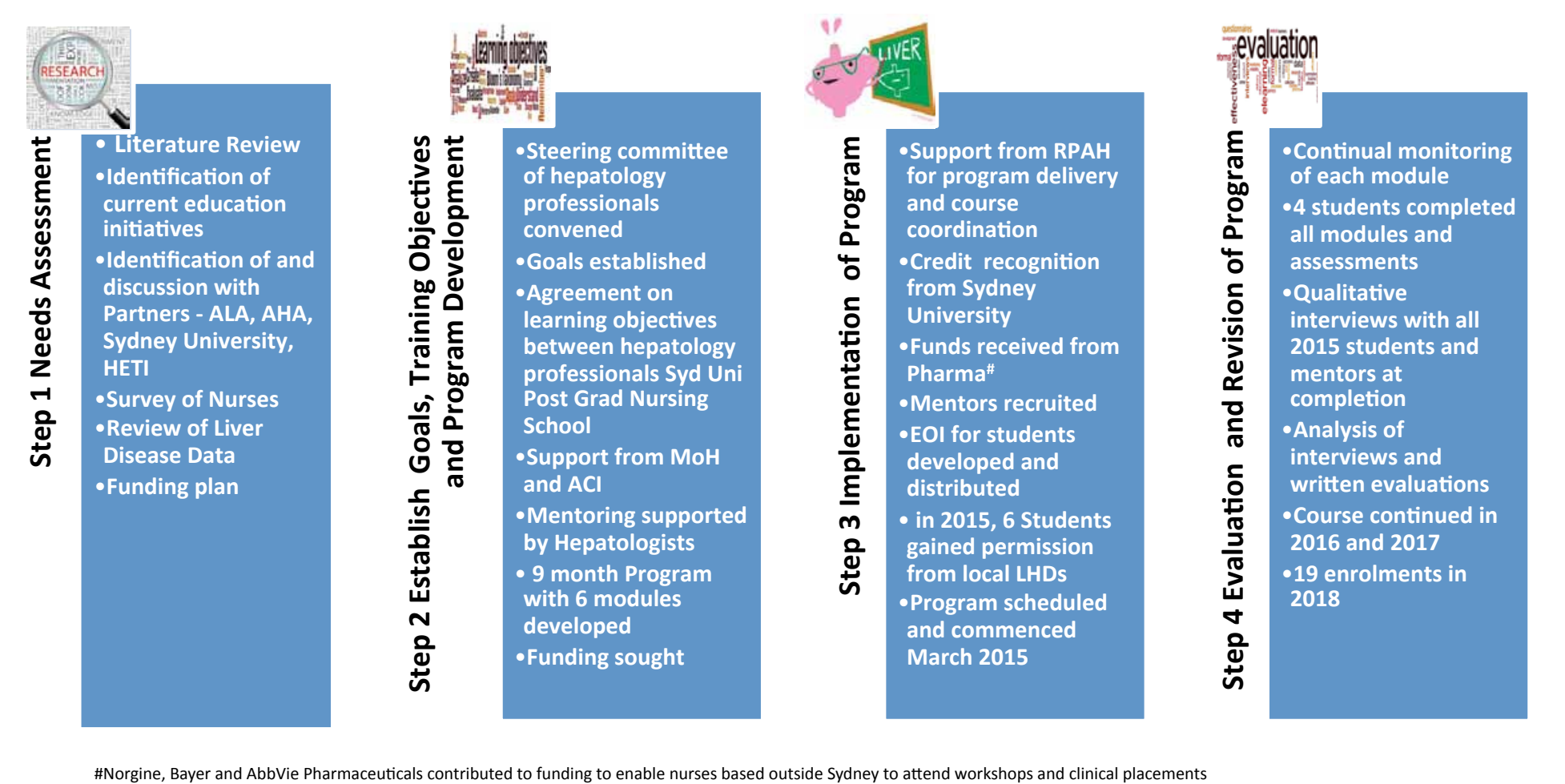
Hepatology related education for nurses based in hospital and primary care nurses is needed to ensure an effective response to the growing burden of disease. We have developed several different strategies to support nurses; and improve the education and training of nurses.

Outcome/Results

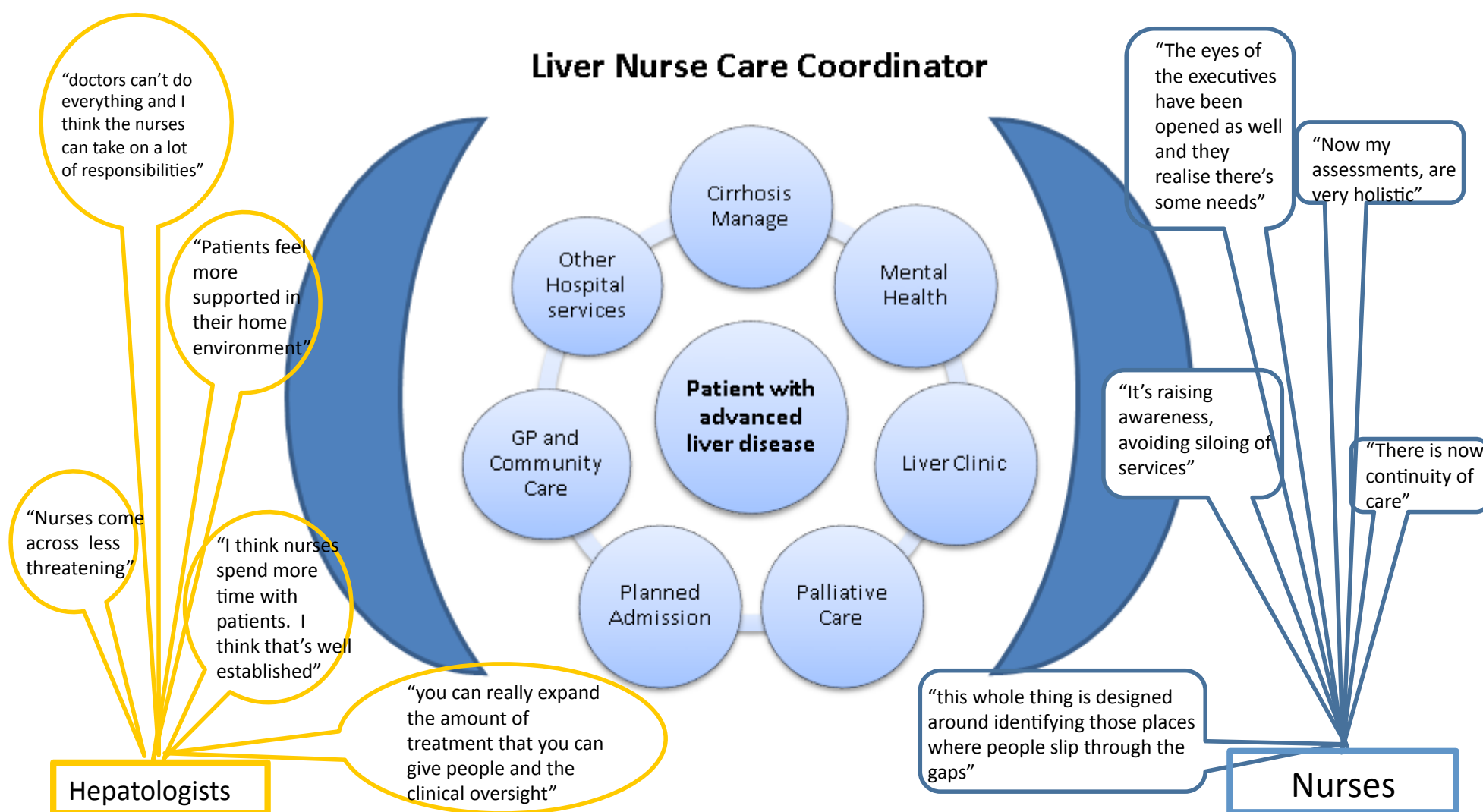
In 2015 we piloted a 9 month university endorsed education program for nurses caring for patients with advanced liver disease. Four nurses completed the program. The program was successfully run in 2016 and 2017. This year we have 19 nurses participating. These nurses come from a range of settings including a regional clinic, justice health, tertiary inpatients and ambulatory care and an OST clinic. Many of the patients these nurses are managing have achieved a hepatitis C cure but their liver disease and complications remain. We also provide a nurse led support service for "hepatitis" nurses working in 4 different regional locations. In addition, since 2012 we have provided a twice yearly Hepatology Nurse Masterclass. This is a day program and 80-100 nurses attend.



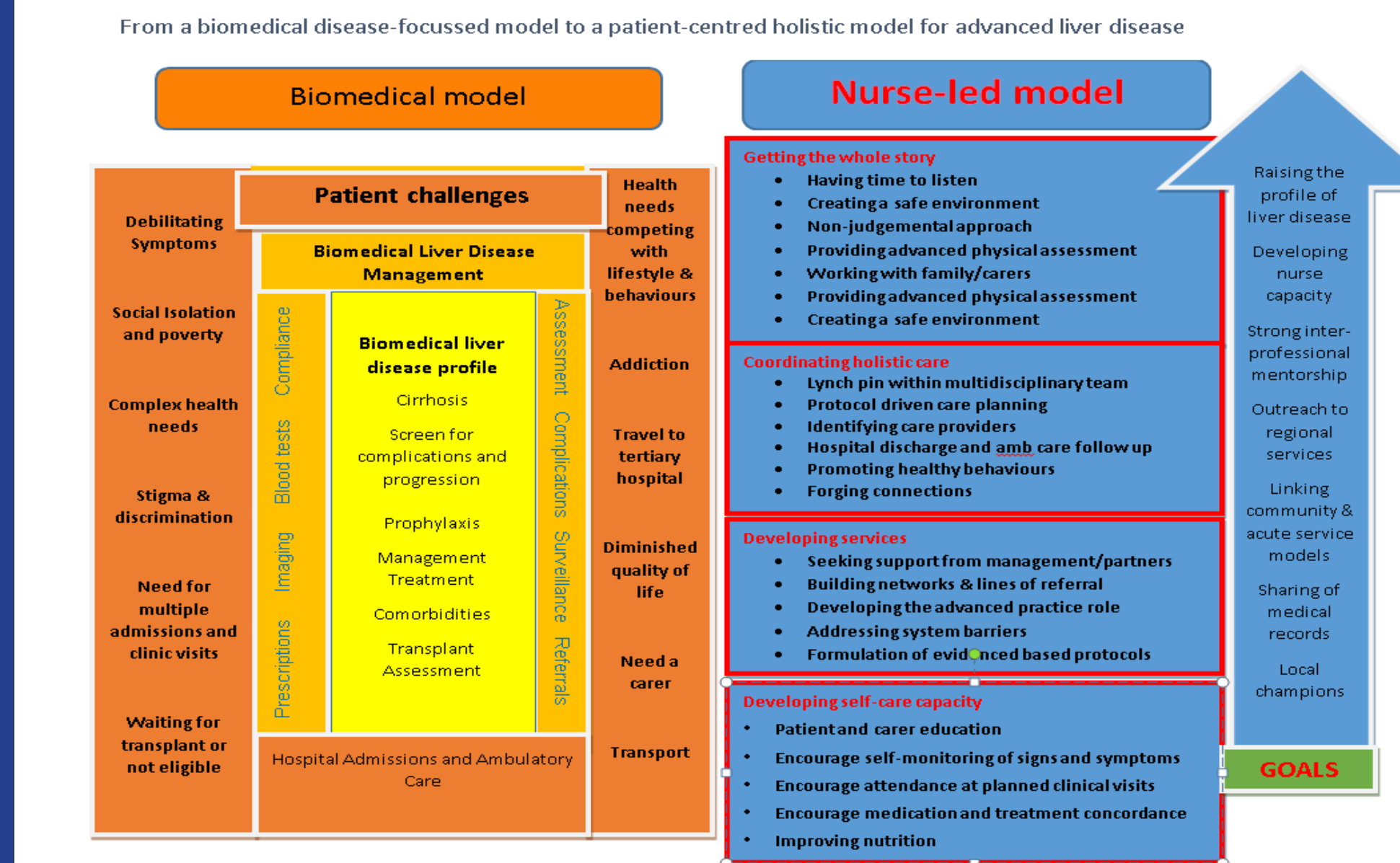
CREATING A NEW ROLE FOR NURSES ADVANCED LIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM NEEDED



Results of Analysis of Interviews – Role of the Nurse



Results of Analysis of Interviews – Description on New Model of Care



Results of Analysis of Interviews – Feedback on the Program

Nurses (Mentees)	Hepatologists (Mentors)
"I used to assess patients but now every new patient I'm doing a clinical examination, you know, abdominal palpation which I may not have done before. So my assessment with someone with advanced liver disease has certainly changed - much more sound... you're looking and understanding signs of change" Nurse 1	"The greatest [thing] for us... this will be the first time in Australia that we engage nurses in the management of patients with chronic liver disease and more. So the strength of it, is that we have found interest and we enticed even those who were sceptical about it" Mentor 1
"I didn't even know how much I didn't know about advanced liver disease until I started this course." Nurse 2	"I think it's very important and I think part - a lot of the elements of what was provided to them was not just again the medical interactions, but interactions with other support people, particularly for instance dieticians." Mentor 2
"Well, the thing that came out of the course... the big revelation... talking to other... colleagues from it showed me, there is a model that can happen in the community." Nurse 3	"At an educational level, it's creating a major interest within nursing education and nursing careers about liver disease, and advanced liver disease as a career pathway." Mentor 3
"What I - I thought was fantastic about actually doing the program, because they [the mentors] really do care... and they realise what the nurses do." Nurse 4	"It's a complete enhancement of the care of the patients." Mentor 4
"The mentor gave me knowledge and ideas on what I need to do... it made me focus on things I need to really focus on, so it made me prioritise." Nurse 5	"Primary prevention is paramount, nurses are reminded again or refreshed in the course that it's something they can do a lot in terms of patients' course of disease, in the long-term care, over months." Mentor 5
"I now use my own like critical thinking about a patient's situation... it helped me a lot because I do a cirrhosis clinic... it was really good... now I see them in a different way" Nurse 6	"I would... have your alumni participating, so in a... centre... you'd keep it going and if another person wanted to have mentorship, you'd involve the previous mentoree, you could expand knowledge to those people and everyone would build-up...and then they would pass on experience and so you'd get an experienced team of people." Mentor 6

Conclusion/Applications

Despite significant advances in the treatment of hepatitis C and B the burden of advanced liver disease is growing. Whilst the burden of advanced liver disease is growing more education programs targeted towards nurses will be required.

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