

## **Hepatitis c model of care in community corrections – reflections and opportunities to engage with a high-risk cohort**

Bryett R<sup>1</sup>, Nguyen W<sup>1</sup>, Tibbs J<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hepatitis Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

**Background/Approach:** Hepatitis C (HCV) treatment rates have slowed recently in Australia. A targeted approach is needed to access high-risk cohorts. Queensland Correctional Centres have higher rates of HCV than the general community. A significant number of HCV positive individuals do not access or continue HCV treatment on release from prison, due to insufficient care coordination between prisons and community health systems.

**Analysis/Argument:** In response to this care coordination gap, Hepatitis Queensland (HQ) collaborated with Redlands Community Corrections, to establish a monthly HCV testing and treatment clinic in August 2020. The clinic, staffed by a doctor, nurse, project officer and phlebotomist, was delivered onsite at the Community Corrections district office. Follow-up was managed by the GP and nurse via telehealth and other means of communication. To ensure clinical governance and maximise efficiency, robust clinic procedures were observed.

**Outcome/Results:** The clinic was successful in accessing a difficult to reach cohort. HQ has replicated the clinic at two additional Community Corrections locations. The second location was established in April 2021, the third in September 2021. The clinics have been well supported by staff and clients. Between August 2020 and November 2021, a total of 148 clients have been screened. 33 clients have tested HCV positive and 21 HCV positive clients have been provided with a treatment script. Of those who have commenced treatment, 6 (28.57%) have completed SVR 12 and achieved cure.

**Conclusions/Applications:** Community Corrections is a high prevalence setting that should be considered as a priority setting alongside correctional centres. This model of care has proven to be easily replicated within different sites as well as having the potential to be scaled into other jurisdictions. This is an important setting that should be prioritised if Australia is to meet its elimination goals.

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