

ENHANCING HCV TREATMENT IN THE TRANSITION SPACE

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BACKGROUND

People who inject drugs (PWID) are overrepresented in prison populations. The overall hepatitis C (HCV) prevalence in prisons is 30%, and 60% among those who inject drugs compared to the general population.

A genuine challenge facing prisoners on release from correctional institutions is the effective linkage to health services in the community. This sometimes includes the transfer of health records and medications and can be a difficult time for individuals trying to re-establish health care and maintain treatment or access to care in the community.

ANALYSIS

In 2018, Hepatitis Queensland (HQ) finalised development of a pilot project for delivery in Probation and Parole (PaP) offices from January - June 2019. Four district offices in South East Queensland have been included in the pilot - Brisbane Central, Ipswich, Inala and Caboolture. These offices have been identified as regions with a high prevalence of HCV clients.

Through the facilitation of 30 minute workshops at each office covering the basics of HCV and how to support clients in accessing treatment in the community the aim was to upskill the workforce and better enhance the health pathway for parolees.

OUTCOMES

The framework has proven to be successful in supporting parolees to access HCV treatment in the community whilst also raising awareness about treatment availability and, for those who are unaware, that the new treatments offer a cure. Coordination of health services and community providers promotes positive re-entry outcomes and produces benefits beyond an individual's health. From this pilot, 53 parolees were referred onward for treatment to local community health services.

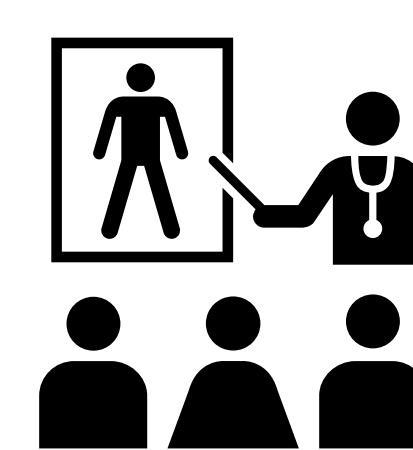
CONCLUSION

Initiatives to provide continuity of HCV treatment upon release are essential, yet providing uninterrupted continuity of care from correctional facilities to the community is challenging. This pilot project shows it is possible to support prisoners upon release to access HCV treatment in the community by establishing strong community health linkages to probation and parole.

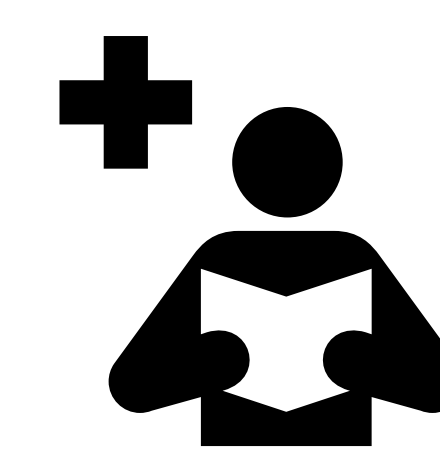
FUTURE WORK

Following on from this pilot project, HQ will explore the opportunity to expand the project into other district offices beyond South East Queensland with the support of Queensland Corrective Services.

Patient journey



5 workshops



43 participants



20-30% of parolees living with HCV



53 parolees referred onward for treatment

Resources



A3 poster series - displayed in interview rooms



Hep C client information card