

## **HEP C PROJECT INREACH 'SAME SAME BUT DIFFERENT SETTING'**

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**Background/Approach:** The Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) in Penrith consists of a multidisciplinary team including 2FTE registered nurses, and a PGYR2 Resident Medical Officer (RMO) one day per week. The team delivers 'Positively Hep' and the 'Deadly Liver Mob' two targeted hep C projects which reach into populations not routinely engaged in mainstream health settings.

Both projects involve education, screening and treatment, with incentives for the first steps of engagement. Participants who test positive for the virus are offered treatment within NSP.

A number of local organisations were identified which deliver services to high risk populations. Both projects have been adapted to suit the needs of the respective client groups and the team has been mobilised to deliver the first stages of each project on an in-reach basis.

**Analysis/Argument:** By using a settings based approach, the team were able to visit four local welfare organisations to generate interest, and begin the process of engaging people in education and screening.

The project model was adapted to suit each setting, however hep C education, screening, active follow-up and referral remained central. Access to a RMO, ensured that all results were followed up in a timely manner and referral for further investigations or treatment made as needed.

**Outcome/Results:** Across the four organisations, 70 engaged in education regarding hepatitis C risk and treatment, 30 were screened, 30 followed-up with results and referral. Having ready access to the RMO has enhanced project work by ensuring that all results are followed up and referral into treatment is initiated. This medical support increased the capacity of the team and helped to break down stereotypes.

**Conclusions/Applications:** Taking hepatitis education and screening initiatives into target settings is an effective way of engaging people in conversation and screening within a trusted environment. Having immediate access to a medical officer ensures that follow-up is timely and suits the needs of the individual.

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