

TOWARDS CURE ON THE INSIDE

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Background: Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre (AGCC), 21kms from Brisbane CBD is a High Security Private Remand Centre managed by GEO Group Australia. It primarily houses up to 1187 male individuals awaiting trial or release to bail with an average stay of 7 to 9 months (up to 2 years pending movements). Hepatitis Queensland (HQ) recognized this particular custodial space as an opportunity to provide a nurse led model of care to test, fibroscan, treat and cure a high prevalence population living with Chronic Hepatitis C Virus (HCV).

Analysis: An initial HQ nurse-led clinic was established on a fortnightly basis in May 2018 linked to the PA Hospital (PAH) telehealth team for HCV treatment. With increasing referrals, visits were changed to weekly in August 2018. The HQ portable fibroscan was taken inside AGCC on each visit. In February 2019 a pilot project was launched between PAH Pharmacy and an accredited s100 AGCC Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) to provide access for commencing HCV medication in a more timely and equitable manner.

Results: During 38 visits to AGCC, 178 prisoners were screened and linked to HCV care by the HQ outreach nurse. Eight telehealth sessions with the PAH Hepatologist saw 42 prisoners commenced on DAAs. 30% GT1a and 70% GT3. Fibroscans were performed on 71 prisoners (8 > than 9.5kPa). The 2019 s100 VMO pilot project has seen 23 more scripts generated from 2 sessions.

Conclusion: Movement within remand makes it difficult to define exact cure rates. Remaining DAA treatment courses accompany the prisoner, whether released by Court or transferred to another correctional facility. This novel and effective model demonstrates how possible it is to commence HCV treatment in the remand setting as we all work towards elimination.

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