

## SO YOUR PRISON IS HEP C FREE – NOW WHAT?

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### **Background:**

Lotus Glen Correctional Centre (LGCC) is an 800-bed male prison in Mareeba, near Cairns, in Far North Queensland. A rapid roll-out of hepatitis C treatment to prisoners began in March 2016, with the arrival of the Direct Acting Agents (DAAs). This resulted in the rapid near-elimination of hepatitis C from the prison environment, with prevalence below 2% of inmates. Numbers treated with DAAs were 69 in 2016, 57 in 2017, and 66 in 2018.

### **Analysis:**

Maintaining that low prevalence has meant overcoming a number of challenges, including:

1. Prisoners being transferred from southern Queensland to LGCC to access hepatitis C treatment
2. Changes in nursing staff, including moving from a model of a hepatitis C 'lead nurse' to one where all nurses are trained to manage hepatitis C
3. Changes in pharmacy staff and the ongoing need to educate pharmacy about keeping the prison Hep C free into the future
4. Ongoing low numbers of incident cases of hepatitis C in the prison and in those being readmitted to the prison, with implications for repeat testing of inmates
5. Maintaining enthusiasm and interest among staff who feel that the prison is already 'hep C free' and thus the task is perceived to be completed
6. Engaging the probation and parole sector to ensure there is continuation into the community once inmates are released

### **Conclusions:**

We will share our considerations and solutions to the commonly-asked questions we receive from around Queensland and the rest of the country.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

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