

What We've Learnt from 7,000 Peer Work Engagements: Developing A Gold Standard for Hepatitis C Peer Partnership Work and Linkage to Care

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Background/ Approach: Since 2018 Hepatitis NSW's *Peer Partnership Program* has been enabling improved access to hep C healthcare for priority populations in key services across NSW. Peer and clinical expertise are combined to develop a tailored approach to meet client needs at each service and improve the cascade of care.

Analysis/ Argument: Through expertise that has been built over 400 service visits we will present guidelines for achieving success when doing hep C outreach work in the community, with a person-centred approach and strong involvement of peer workers at its core.

Outcome/ Results: Through our clinical and peer partnership model, we have engaged with over 7,000 people accessing key services. This has led to 2,700 people seeing a nurse, 2,000 hep C tests, and 300 people accessing hep C treatment. In addition, 700 people have had their non-hep C health needs met through this facilitated healthcare interaction. Our diverse team of 30 peer workers have developed a wealth of experience, and analysis of our data has given us evidence and expertise to advise on the most effective, tailored approaches to engaging with community, in community.

Conclusions/ Applications: We know that treatment numbers are decreasing across Australia, and people living with hep C are becoming harder to find, convince, and reach. Simultaneously, we are entering a golden age of peer work where state and commonwealth governments are funding and encouraging the involvement of affected communities in hep C elimination efforts like never before. Showcasing our Peer Partnership Program and presenting best practice guidelines for hep C outreach work is of enormous value to efforts to increase engagement, testing, and treatment numbers as we work towards hep C elimination by 2030.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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