

## **An evaluation of Hepatitis Queensland's Community Corrections Hepatitis C clinics**

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**Background:** Hepatitis Queensland (HQ) have established monthly onsite hepatitis C virus (HCV) clinics at Community Corrections district offices in Redlands and Brisbane South, to engage a cohort at high-risk of HCV infection.

**Methods:** Monthly statistical data on clients, test results and treatment schedules were gathered by HQ. Twenty-five qualitative interviews were conducted with HQ clinic staff, Queensland Corrective Services case managers, and the clinic's clients, to evaluate HQ's new approach from the perspectives of key people involved with the project.

**Results:** The HQ clinics have seen 101 clients, 91 of whom have been tested for HCV. Of those, 22 have tested HCV RNA positive, and 20 have been prescribed treatment. Collaboration with Community Corrections staff has been successful. Case managers have informed clients about upcoming HCV clinics, and rescheduled appointments for some clients to coincide with HQ's next visit. Case managers have also been able to facilitate the clinics' communication with clients who might otherwise have been lost to follow-up. Clients described the benefits of situating the clinics at Community Corrections district offices, providing a convenient opportunity to see a doctor, get blood tests and a Fibroscan, without needing to make other appointments or travel to different locations.

**Conclusion:** HQ's novel approach of having HCV testing, Fibroscan and a doctor who can prescribe at the Community Corrections clinics, has maximised the opportunity to progress clients who test HCV-RNA positive to treatment quickly and efficiently. The HCV clinics' locations at Community Corrections district offices have provided HQ staff with the opportunity to test and treat a cohort that experience difficulties engaging with other community health services. From the clients' points of view, the utility and convenience of the clinics are important factors that contribute to their success and break down barriers to HCV treatment.

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