

HEPATITIS C (HCV) OUTREACH PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS SERVING POPULATIONS WITH INEQUITABLE ACCESS IN CALGARY, AB, CANADA.

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Background: CUPS is an inner-city non-profit organization helping people facing poverty to build resilient lives. Its health clinic offers multifaceted medical care, including a longstanding low-barrier Liver Clinic, and addresses social determinants of health for >5000 people annually. However, more is needed to reach the “hardly-reached” who experience health inequities.

Method: Outreach collaborations began in January 2023 with three organizations including a local shelter, detox center, and a multi-agency social services collaborative. Documentation and organizational agreements were developed to support workflow and information sharing between organizations, and nursing staff were trained to complete HCV point-of care tests (POCT). CUPS Liver Clinic staff, including a peer navigator, provide regular weekly outreach clinics to support staff administering POCTs, for counselling, and to meet with clients to provide linkage to HCV treatment.

Result(s): Between March-May 2023 this model was piloted at the detox centre; 9 detox nurses were trained, with 325 client detox admissions reviewed, of which 23% (75/325) had never been tested for HCV antibody or were overdue for annual screening. 48 POCTs were administered, with 1 new positive, and 21 clients completing bloodwork. 11 unique clients were identified as requiring connection to curative treatment, completed treatment workup bloodwork, and received 1-on-1 counselling. 27% (3/11) of these clients have continued to connect with us through community partnerships following discharge from detox, with 1 person started on treatment as of the end of May 2023. Program implementation is in progress with the remaining two community partnerships.

Conclusion(s): Collaborative partnerships and consistent outreach have helped to expand the reach of the CUPS Liver Clinic to find populations requiring equitable HCV care. The expansion of this outreach model may allow for more consistent client access to HCV screening and provide better linkage to HCV care.

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