

## **PARTNERING WITH CONSUMERS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PRIMARY HEALTH CARE HEPATITIS C TREATMENT MODEL WITHIN A PEER-BASED NEEDLE AND SYRINGE PROGRAM.**

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**Background:** In November 2018 the Kirketon Road Centre (KRC), a primary health care service in Sydney in partnership with the NSW Users and AIDS Association (NUAA) needle and syringe program (NSP) established a daily peer-supported primary health service with a focus on hepatitis C virus (HCV). This study describes the development, activity and outcomes at this clinic.

**Description of model of care:** NUAA peers promoted clinical services including STI/ BBI screening, HCV treatment, vaccination, fibroscan, wound dressing, alcohol and other drugs assessment, and health education. KRC and NUAA staff collaborate to co-ordinate, promote and enhance consumer engagement. Data relating to clinical consultations was extracted from the clinic database.

**Effectiveness:** Between 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018 and 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019 there were 45 clinic days registering 153 visits for 86 individuals, equaling 3.4 clients per clinic. 27% (23/86) had never previously attended KRC. 76% (65/86) were male and 81% (70/86) >35 years of age. 19% (16/86) identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander. 21% (18/86) identified as gay, 17% (15/86) were sex workers. 10% (9/86) were known HIV positive and 34% (29/86) had ever been diagnosed HCV positive. 45 dried blood spot tests for Hepatitis C RNA were performed by the NSP team, and an additional 27 Hepatitis C IgG or plasma RNA tests were conducted. 9 individuals were HCV RNA positive; 6 have initiated treatment with peer support, 2 receiving their medications from the NSP. 16 people received hepatitis B vaccine.

**Conclusion and next steps:** Operating a clinical service in collaboration with peers has demonstrated excellent consumer engagement, particularly with consumers who had not previously engaged in healthcare. Consumers attending the NSP are highly marginalised with limited access to care. Screening and HCV treatment has successfully been carried out using this collaborative model. A more detailed evaluation of motivation of consumer engagement is planned to take place.

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