

## **Hepatitis C Elimination in NSW by 2028 – Priming the System to Deliver Change**

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**Approach:** The NSW Ministry of Health (Ministry) has made the virtual elimination of hepatitis C (HCV) a system priority in NSW. The Ministry drives performance in Local Health Districts and the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network by setting elimination targets and progress is monitored by the quarterly reporting of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) data. Implementation priorities focus on key settings including Needle and Syringe Programs (NSPs), alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, custodial settings and Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Services (ACCHSs). State-wide strategies that support treatment uptake include scaling up the Dried Blood Spot (DBS) testing pilot, the HepCured Communications Strategy in partnership with Hepatitis NSW and the NSW Users & AIDS Association (NUAA), GP education and peer-led test and treat innovations.

**Argument:** Increased access to high quality treatment in community settings improves equity by allowing tertiary liver clinics to focus on people with cirrhosis and fibrosis. By focusing on key settings such as NSPs, AOD services, and custodial settings as well as partnership models utilising peer-based approaches and other novel strategies, NSW Health will improve access to treatment for people who inject drugs (PWID).

**Results:** Between 1 March 2016 and 30 June 2021, NSW treated 45% of people (31,946) estimated to be living with HCV, saving an estimated \$96,476,865 in avoided care costs. This includes 5,184 people in NSW prisons (41% of whom identified as Aboriginal).

**Conclusion:** Using existing strategies, 45% of people living with HCV have been treated in NSW. Sustained efforts in key settings to actively test and treat PWID-related priority populations is critical to ensure NSW achieves HCV elimination by 2028.

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