



BE LIVER SMART PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

Hepatitis Queensland (HQ), a community organisation, recognises the correlation between hepatitis C (HCV) and liver cancer and understands the importance of preventing liver disease and the detection of early liver conditions and liver cancer in Queensland.

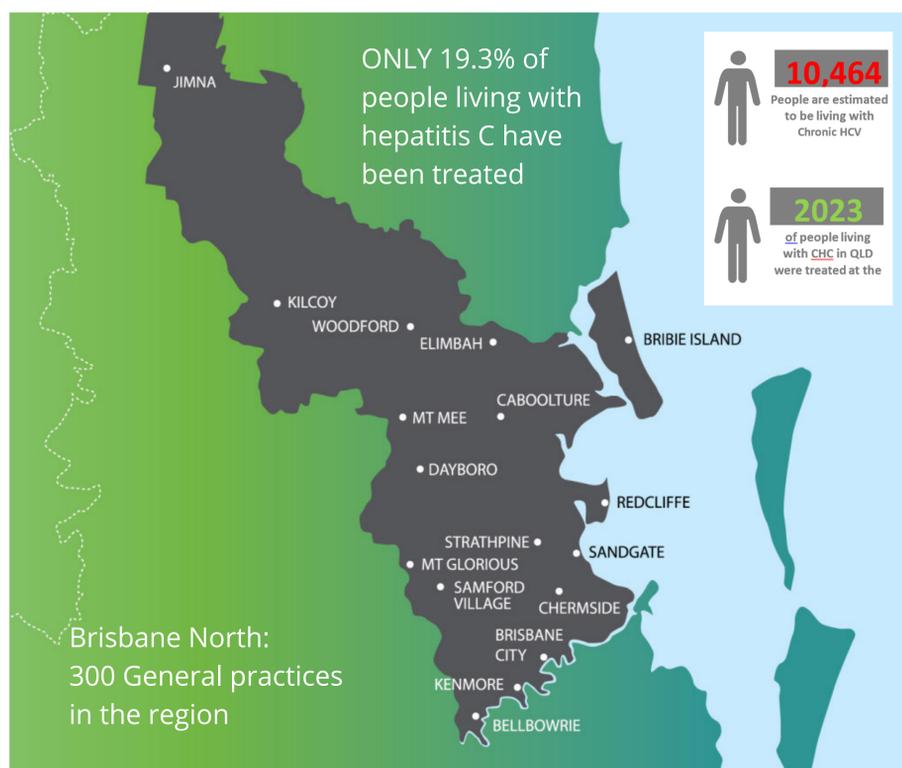
Globally, viral hepatitis is responsible for 80% of liver cancers. The majority of primary liver cancers are from untreated chronic hepatitis B and C infection. In Australia, around 54 percent of all liver cancer cases are preventable.

METHODS

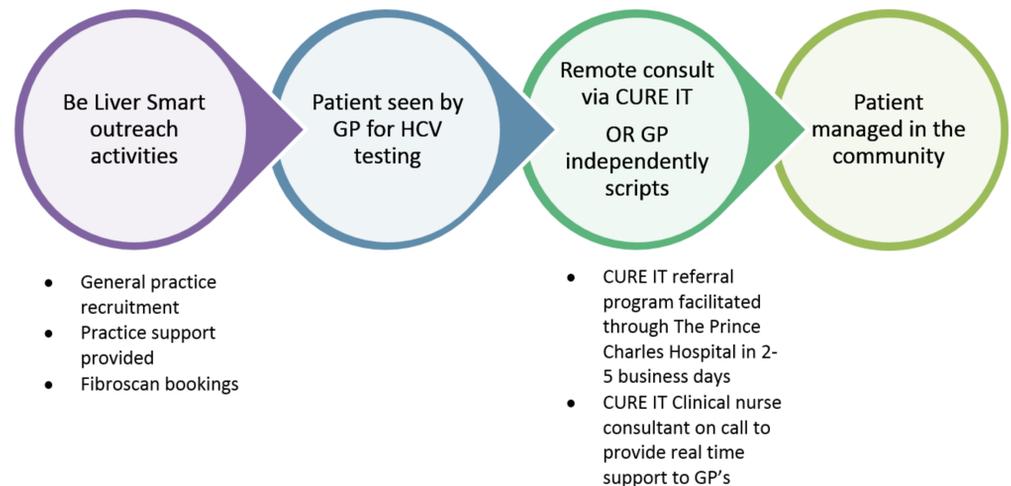
HQ's approach was to normalise HCV in primary health care with a future direction of expanding the project into liver health. The "Be Liver Smart" project ran from April to June 2019 in the Brisbane North region.

The project was designed to support medical practices in a variety of opt in and opt out services provided by a HQ outreach community nurse and project staff. These services included:

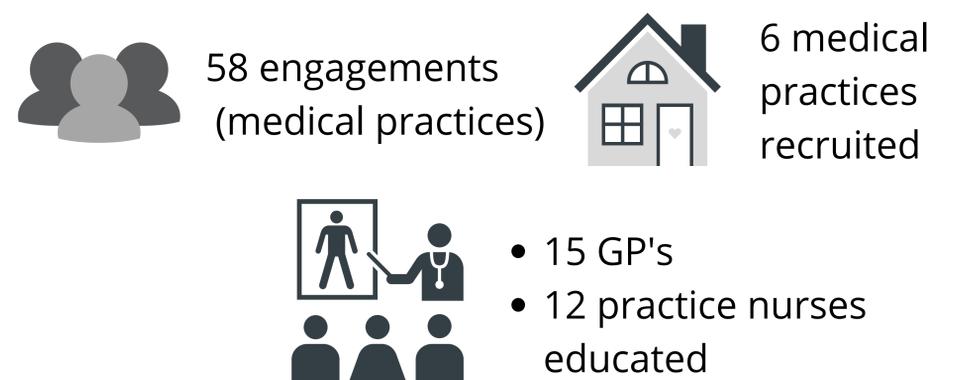
- provision of a community nurse to assist medical practices in identifying patients living with HCV and providing the appropriate referral pathway (CURE IT referral program);
- supporting medical practices through provision of a Fibroscan;
- workforce development for practice staff including education for General Practitioners (GP's) on treating HCV;
- provision of a practice toolkit (adapted for local use from the EC partnership toolkit);
- education sessions for practice nurses to build knowledge and skills in the management of HCV within primary health care.



FRAMEWORK



OUTCOMES



LESSONS LEARNT

- Most GP's are screening, aware of treatment however find that it remains too complex to manage within their practice or do not have enough time
- GP's remain reliant on tertiary referral for their patients
- Current resources, factsheets, pathways are still too complicated
- Practice nurses are key drivers in implementing HCV services
- Establishing relationship and rapport with medical practices takes time especially during peak periods where accreditation remains a priority or other competing projects.
- Primary health networks are a valuable source of information when identifying potential medical practices

CONCLUSION

The "Be Liver Smart" project is an example of an innovative approach to mobilising the workforce and dissolving traditional barriers delivered by a community organisation. Future expansion of this project will commence across other identified regions in South East Queensland with low treatment uptake.