

TOWARDS CURE ON THE INSIDE

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BACKGROUND

Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre (AGCC), 21kms from Brisbane CBD is a High Security Private Remand Centre managed by GEO Group Australia. Hepatitis Queensland (HQ) recognised this particular custodial space as an opportunity to provide a nurse led model of care to test, fibroscan, treat and cure a high prevalence population living with hepatitis C (HCV).

An initial HQ nurse in-reach clinic was established on a fortnightly basis in May 2018 linked to the PA Hospital (PAH) telehealth team for HCV treatment. Clinics were increased to weekly in August 2018 to address the high volume of referrals with included Fibroscan service.

In February 2019 a pilot project was launched between PAH Pharmacy and an accredited s100 AGCC Visiting Medical Officer (VMO) to provide prisoners the opportunity to commence HCV treatment.



RESULTS



208 prisoners screened & linked to HCV care



Telehealth session with PAH hepatologist:
42 prisoners commenced treatment



s100 VMO project:
46 prisoners commenced treatment

OUTCOMES

- 88 prisoners in total commenced treatment
- 30% GT1a
- 70% GT3
- 79 Fibroscans performed

The prisoner maintains access to their remaining treatment whether they are released by the court system or transferred to another correctional facility.

CHALLENGES

Unlike incarceration following sentencing, remand is a complex space that presents challenges for both the inreach hep C nurse and prisoners. These can include:

- Sudden withdrawal from alcohol and drugs of addiction;
- Fear and anxiety, exacerbated by early entry into corrections;
- Suspicion and trust issues towards an inreach hep C nurse;
- Lack of cooperation and understanding as prisoners are not always briefed about the role of the inreach hep C nurse and how this relates to them;
- Lack of clarity in the communication channels for movement to the health centre between prison officers and the prisoners.
- Prison lockdowns

CONCLUSION

This novel and effective model demonstrates how it is possible to commence HCV treatment in the remand setting.

However movement within correctional facilities from remand makes it difficult to define exact cure rates.