

THE ELIMINATE HEPATITIS C PARTNERSHIP



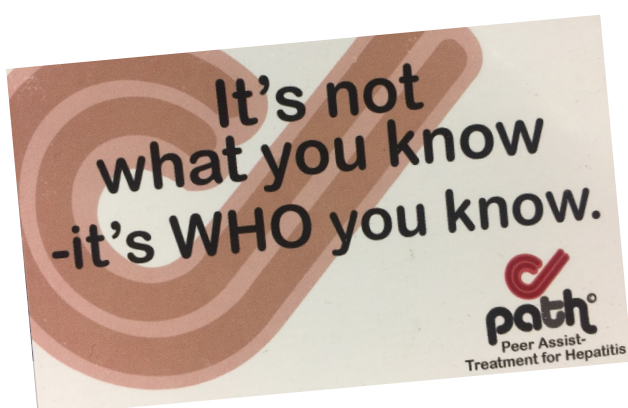
EC Partnership

EC UPDATE - FEBRUARY 2020

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING WITH THE EC TEAM?

PEER-LED PROGRAMS

The PATH (Peer Assisted Treatment for Hepatitis C) team based at Access Health in St Kilda are continuing to build visibility and trust among the local community. Rob and Caro from Harm Reduction Victoria recently hosted a BBQ and distributed packs for the Christmas/New Year's break. So far the duo have recorded over 150 interactions with people around St Kilda - including instances of education and referrals to clinical services.



EC Victoria has also secured funding for a Peer-Led project through the Gilead COMMIT community grants. This model will trial and compare three peer-led support and service navigation interventions that aim to build trust and increase engagement with primary health and harm reduction services and increase hepatitis C (HCV) testing and treatment among people who inject drugs (PWID). Commencing in mid-2020, the peer program will aim to assess:

- How peers embedded in a health services can help support more PWID to get tested and complete DAA treatment
- How roving peers in a local area of a health service can help engage new clients and refer them into a health service for HCV testing & care
- How peers can be supported to provide rapid point of care testing and monetary incentives to help PWID progress through the care cascade.

Contact Alisa,
alisa.pedrana@burnet.edu.au or Sione,
sionec@hrvic.org.au for more information.

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WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING WITH THE EC TEAM?

EC EXPERIENCE COHORT

The EC Experience project aims to better understand people's experiences of treatment and identify barriers and enablers to taking up DAAs. We are recruiting people with a history of injecting drug use who are at different stages in the hepatitis C care cascade.

As of January 2019, we have recruited 281 people into the study from 4 sites, including:

- 14 who have tested negative in the last year
- 102 people who haven't had a blood test in the last year
- 120 people who have been diagnosed and have not been treated
- 45 people who have started or completed treatment.

In December we also met with HRVic staff and were invited to attend their peer networker meeting to share and discuss our initial findings with the volunteers. This meeting highlighted the need to continue a focused effort to reduce stigma and discrimination and to promote the peer-led information provision.

Finally, this year we are planning to publish preliminary outcomes and will also conduct a qualitative study into the impact of past experiences of stigma on healthcare access.

Contact Kat, kathleen.ryan@burnet.edu.au for more information.

EC HEALTH PROMOTION

We are planning for the next Health Promotion Working Group meeting to be in late Feb/early March. A doodle poll for meeting times to be sent soon to set a date. Key focuses will be results and learnings from the 2019 testing campaign and how these could be applied for testing campaigns in 2020.

Contact Judy, judy.gold@burnet.edu.au for more information.

REVIEW OF TESTING CAMPAIGN

Kico (one of the EC nurses) is currently working on measuring the costs and impact of the EC World Hepatitis Day testing campaigns, including the number of people who tested, how many started treatment, and the overall cost to deliver the project.

We found the testing campaign results in a cost per person tested of around \$250-\$330. The cost of identifying someone who is PCR positive is around \$930-\$1260 and the cost of initiating someone on treatment is around \$2250-\$3100.

These results will inform planning for future testing campaigns. Some key learnings are around needing to consider incentives and/or support for clients to return for their testing results.

Contact Kico, kico.chan@burnet.edu.au for more information.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

HEPATITIS VICTORIA/LIVERWELL®

Expansion of LiverWELL® resources suite

Recently Hepatitis Victoria/ LiverWELL® expanded their suite of resources to include two new brochures: [Alcohol-Related Liver Disease](#) and [Liver Cancer](#).



The brochures aim to help people understand different conditions and provides an overview as well as treatment options and where to go for further information. These colourful brochures are available in digital and hard-copy format and can be ordered on the Hepatitis Victoria/LiverWELL®/ website.

For further information contact Mark Pearce, mark@hepvic.org.au.

HepReady® Regional 2019 wrap-up

In the second half of 2019, Hepatitis Victoria/LiverWELL® facilitated HepReady Regional education sessions for health and community workers, supported by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services. Targeting areas of high prevalence across the state, the last two events of 2019 were held in Wodonga and Bendigo.

These workshops bring a local perspective to testing, treatment and prevention of viral hepatitis and liver health with a range of clinical and lived experience speakers. Hepatitis Victoria/LiverWELL's HepReady® education sessions are available for anyone working with people living with or at risk of viral hepatitis.

For more information contact Sarah Kleinitz, sarah@hepvic.org.au.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Victorian BBV STI education and events calendar

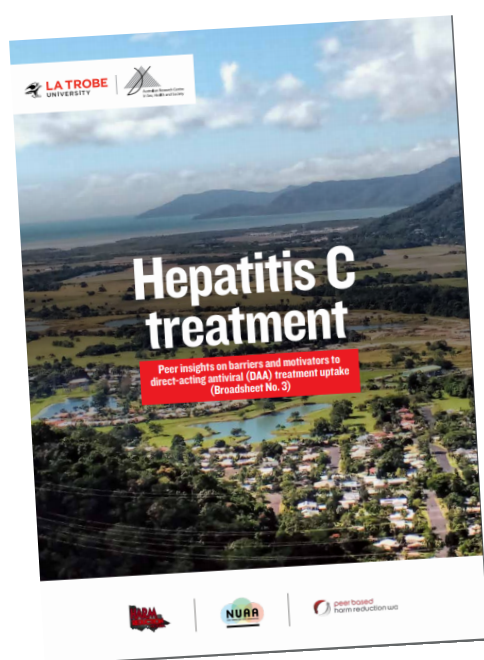
[This events calendar](#) has been established to create a central 'depot' for Victorian BBV/STI training and events. It aims to increase access to education and training across Victoria, assist with planning, and cross promotion of events.

Contact
Elizabeth, Elizabeth.Birbilis@dhhs.vic.gov.au for more information.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

HARM REDUCTION VICTORIA

The final broadsheet from the Peer Insights project run by the Australian Research centre for sex, health and society (ARCSHS) in collaboration with Harm Reduction Victoria, NSW Users and Aids Association, Peer Based Harm Reduction Western Australia has been released. The report includes recommendations on increasing uptake of DAAs among PWID in rural and regional areas.



HRVic also recently held the first whole-program meeting day for the Peer Network Program, bringing all of our volunteers together for training and an update from the Burnet Institute's EC Experience cohort study.

Lastly, HRVic and the Association of Participating Service Users are building on the Reducing Harmful Drug Use Through Peer-led Networks (RHDUPLN). This is a 2-year trial that will develop best-practice processes for employing harm reduction peer workers in mainstream organisations.

Contact Hunter, hunterm@hrvic.org.au for more information

ST VINCENT'S PRISON PROGRAM

In November 2019, the Statewide Hepatitis Program held their annual Study Day at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne which was attended by 35 corrections health staff from across Victoria. The program included presentations on drug use and stigma from Jane Dicka (Harm Reduction Victoria) and Gabrielle Bennett (Victorian Viral Hepatitis Educator), opioid substitution treatment programs (Dr David Jacka), and Hepatitis Victoria's prisoner peer education program (Neylan Akut). An update on hepatitis C elimination and the importance of prison treatment was also given by Mark Stoové (Burnet Institute).

For more information, or to be added to the mailing list for 2020, contact SVHM.shp@svha.org.au

NEW RESEARCH & OTHER UPDATES

NEW PUBLICATIONS

'[The crucial role of GPs in eliminating hepatitis C](#)' - the latest supplement brings together a series of five articles, first published in *Medicine Today*, that guide GPs through hepatitis C testing, treatment, cure and follow up in primary care. A list of useful online resources for GPs managing patients with hepatitis C is also included.

[A systematic review and meta-analysis](#) of cure and reinfection among people who inject drugs.

[A cost-effectiveness analysis](#) comparing primary versus hospital-based specialist care for direct acting antiviral hepatitis C treatment

[A case study of the Cure-it program](#) that explores the enablers and barriers to a community-based hepatitis C treatment model

UPCOMING EVENTS

[HIV and Hepatitis Pre and Post Test Discussion](#) - A short course for infection prevention and control practitioners.
25 February at 9am

CLEARING THE PATH CAMPAIGN

Hepatitis NSW and NUAA are rolling out [Clearing the Path](#) - a fresh health promotion campaign targeted to people who inject drugs. This campaign is a precursor to the forthcoming larger campaign later in 2020.



Informed by research conducted in 2019, the campaign will help to promote HCV treatment, reduce HCV-related stigma, and debunk myths around treatment.

UPDATE ON PHARM EC

The PharmEC project is a randomised controlled trial that will compare point-of-care testing and treatment for hepatitis C by a nurse in pharmacies with standard provision of information only. The target group is people who are currently taking opioid substitution therapy.

Enrollment of pharmacies was completed with the first participants recruited in October. As of January 2020, 96 participants have been recruited (50 from control and 46 from intervention pharmacies) with 9 confirmed HCV positive and commencing treatment.

Contact Minh, minh.pham@burnet.edu.au for more information.