

THE ELIMINATE HEPATITIS C PARTNERSHIP



EC Partnership

EC UPDATE - APRIL 2019

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

EC Sites

Currently the EC team is working with nine sites, delivering tailored support to scale-up hepatitis C treatment. Sites that are currently receiving EC support are:

- Ballarat Community Health
- Access Health
- Mediclinic
- Health Works Cohealth
- Genesis Medical Centre
- Innerspace
- First Step
- Lygon Court Medical Centre
- MSIR

Sites that have finished up their EC involvement are:

- Braybrook cohealth
- South Wangaratta Medical Centre

Sites that are planned for involvement in the future are:

- Bolton Clarke Homeless Persons Program
- Monash SEADs

EC Toolkit

We are pleased to announce that we will collaborate to adapt the [EC toolkit](#) for use in Queensland. We are also planning a re-print of the Victorian toolkit to ensure we can meet the demand for this resource.

If you have any feedback or resources to include in the toolkit email: chloe.layton@burnet.edu.au



ACCESS Reporting

Anonymous patient data extracted from EC clinics via the ACCESS surveillance project allows assessment of hepatitis C management at services. It provides clinics with data on how their clinic is managing hepatitis C and how this is changing over time.

ACCESS is now extracting data from 9 EC sites. Site-specific reports have been developed for 7 EC clinics, providing detailed information on patient demographics, number of hepatitis C tests performed and hepatitis C testing rate, hepatitis C positivity, number of patients treated, and post-treatment outcomes. EC staff are now visiting participating clinics to deliver ACCESS data face-to-face with GPs and practice managers.

In 2018 ACCESS captured data from:

- 9 EC sites
- 2,974 patients tested for hep C
- 391 RNA-positive patients
- 255 patients treated for hep C

At EC sites in 2018:

85% of positive antibody tests were followed up with an RNA test within 3 months

65% of RNA-positive patients received an electronic script for hep C treatment

HEALTH PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Improving accessibility of written health promotion materials

EC supported a training workshop in November 2018 for individuals and organisations, including EC, involved in creating written health promotion materials for hepatitis C. The workshop was hosted by Gabrielle Bennett, the Victorian Hepatitis Educator based at St Vincent's Hospital.

Following the workshop, we compiled this [comparison of available checklists](#) to improve the readability and accessibility of written health information. The intention is that all written materials designed or supported by EC will use a formal process such as one of these checklists during their development.

People Who Inject Drugs Mapping

The EC team have been working on a mapping exercise to better target hepatitis C health promotion resources to people who inject drugs. This has involved examination of existing data on people who inject drugs and workshops with peer workers and people who inject drugs.

We will share the results of the mapping so that it can be used to inform future health promotion initiatives. We envisage the mapping can act as a tool to help define which messages and approaches may resonate most with different sub-populations of PWID.

NEW RESEARCH PROJECTS

EC EXPERIENCE

The EC Experience cohort is now recruiting and aims to better understand people's experiences of treatment, and identify barriers and enablers to taking up DAAs.

The study will recruit from at least eight EC sites. EC Experience will target recruitment to people who have not tested for hep C recently or have been diagnosed with hep C and not treated. Participants will be followed for 12 months to explore changing experiences over time.

This work will provide evidence for future EC activities that aim to overcome barriers to hepatitis C testing and treatment. EC Experience has completed recruitment at the first EC Experience site.

PHARM EC

The EC team have received funding to implement a new trial of pharmacy-based hepatitis C testing and treatment. The trial will allow clients of pharmacies dispensing OST to be tested for hepatitis C and evaluated for treatment from within the pharmacy using a nurse-based model of care, and if eligible have their hepatitis C treatment provided alongside their daily OST dose.

The trial is currently in the set-up phase but is likely to start up later in 2019.

Contact minh.pham@burnet.edu.au with any queries.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Victorian Nurse Practitioner Program (VNPP) Hepatology funding round

For the second year running the Department of Health and Human Services (the department) made available funding to support nurse practitioner models designed to improve the care and management of patients with Hepatitis C (Hepatology models of care).

The funding package comprised of a one-off payment to adapt the Hepatology model developed by Melbourne Health, role implementation, recruitment and appointment of a Nurse Practitioner Candidate (NPC); and a one-off payment for ongoing support of that NPC. Applications closed in February 2019.

Viral hepatitis training for Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) workers

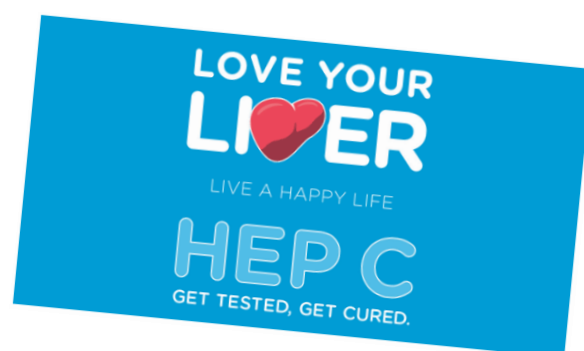
The department has funded Hepatitis Victoria to provide free viral hepatitis training to AOD workers. AOD workers are best placed to educate and encourage clients, where appropriate, to be tested and treated for hepatitis B and/or hepatitis C. This funding is part of a workforce development initiative to build capacity of AOD workers. More information is available [here](#).

Integrated Hepatitis C Nurses (IHCNs)

The department engaged the Australian Research Centre for Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) to undertake the reorientation of the IHCS to ensure a contemporary nurse led model of care for hepatitis C elimination. The project is progressing well with quarterly Community of Practice meetings and the development of a draft Integrated Hepatitis C Nurse Service Framework.

Love Your Liver with Hepatitis Victoria

The Department has funded Hepatitis Victoria to run the Love Your Liver campaign, a liver cancer prevention initiative that combines the promotion of hepatitis B and C awareness, testing and treatment. The campaign will geographically target a variety of areas with a multi-pronged media campaign including forums for health and community workers. These areas were selected based on data highlighting high prevalence and low treatment uptake for viral hepatitis in Victoria. [Workshops planned in 2019](#) include: Mildura, Albury/Wodonga and Bendigo.



ST VINCENT'S PRISON PROGRAM

The St Vincent's Hospital team continue to run a hepatitis C treatment service in prisons across the state.

The team are visiting all prisons in the state either fortnightly or weekly and have recently increased their service provision with an additional part-time staff member: former Burnet TAP nurse, Amy Tonkin. Dr Tim Papaluca is also increasing health service to prisons with an additional monthly clinic.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

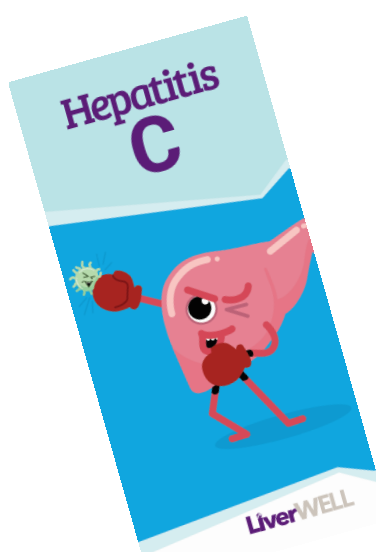
HEPATITIS VICTORIA

Fit pack stickers

With support from EC, Hepatitis Victoria have been working with NSP services to gather feedback to redesign the existing fit pack stickers with new messages. The messages are focused around commonly heard barriers to hepatitis C treatment among people who inject drugs. These stickers have proven to be immensely popular so the redesign and reprint will aim to cater to demand. The aim is for these stickers to be available in time for World Hepatitis Day in July.

New LiverWELL hepatitis C brochure

To complement Hepatitis Victoria's existing and growing collection of LiverWELL resources a brochure on hepatitis C has been developed. This catered to a gap that became evident in Hepatitis Victoria's resources for broad overarching information on hepatitis C. Available online and to order soon or contact isabelle@hepvic.org.au



Custodial work

Hepatitis Victoria have started recruitment for a survey of prison staff to gauge their knowledge on viral hepatitis. The data collected from this will be used to inform need for further education and work in this area.

A new resource specifically for prison workers is being developed focussing on transmission risks and practical information regarding viral hepatitis in the custodial setting. A booklet and poster will be finalised in May and distributed to all prisons in Victoria. Contact neylan@hepvic.org.au with any questions.

Regional forums with DHHS

Supported by the Department of Health and Human Services, Hepatitis Victoria is running free, accredited HEPReady workshops in regional areas. They are an opportunity for all staff and services working with people who either live with or are at risk of viral hepatitis and liver disease to develop their knowledge and skills in a one day workshop. Expert speakers will present on the epidemiology and prevalence of hepatitis and discuss recent developments in the management of the diseases. The next workshop will be in April in Mildura and then Albury – Wodonga in May. More information is [here](#).

Contact Martin martin@hepvic.org.au with any questions.

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

HARM REDUCTION VICTORIA

Harm Reduction Victoria have recently employed a new Health Promotion Officer – Rob Leitermann - who will be working on our Blood Borne Virus peer education programs. This includes a new project, currently in the planning stages, which will examine the effectiveness and feasibility of peer navigation through hep C treatment with people who inject drugs in Victorian settings. The project is being developed in partnership with EC and the Burnet Institute.

Rob will be focusing on hepatitis C peer ed with people who inject drugs for the first few months with us. If you would like us to undertake this sort of work with your clients feel free to contact Rob on robl@hrvic.org.au and Jane Dicka, Health Promotion Program Coordinator on janed@hrvic.org.au.

Health Promotion

Over the past few months HRVic have also been developing a written resource for use with the EC Experience Cohort and by HRVic peer educators and health promotion workers. The pamphlet aims to be a simple myth-busting tool, clarifying key messages around hep C treatment, reinfection and re-treatment. The resource has been focus group tested with our Peer Network Program volunteers and will take on feedback from the EC Cohort as well.

Here is a preview of the resource:



Prevention

As part of HRVic’s BBV prevention work, the Peer Network volunteers aim to get injecting equipment into the hands of PWID who aren’t willing or able to get to a traditional NSP service, and they have recently altered our data collection to more accurately monitor this.

By having the volunteers ask their contacts where they would have acquired injecting equipment if they were not in contact with the PNP, there is now concrete data on how many of our contacts rely on peer to peer distribution. Initial analysis shows that approximately 25% of PNP contacts do not access sterile equipment outside of the program, with this number climbing as high as 73% in some postcodes.

Training for workers

Outside of the EC Health Promotion Work HRVic continue to partner with St Vincent’s on Bloody Serious Facts Viral Hepatitis C Training for health care workers. They also guest facilitated ASHM’s Hep C for NSP workshop in March 2019.

Stigma & Discrimination

HRVic has also produced two anti-stigma videos for the Pharmacy Guild’s training on working with people who use drugs for their members. This, along with the production of an anti-stigma module for LaTrobe’s Pharmacist training in Bendigo is an important piece of work if pharmacists are to become more involved in delivering DAA treatment.

NEW RESOURCES AND RESEARCH

Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology have published the [results of a Commission](#) into accelerating the elimination of viral hepatitis. Burnet researchers Margaret Hellard and Jess Howell are authors on the report, which can be accessed free of charge

A report on the [findings from interviews](#) with participants in the Rapid-EC project has been published in the Journal of Viral Hepatology.

A new [analysis of treatment uptake data](#) after the introduction of universal access to DAAs has been published, highlighting the need for easy access to testing and linkage to care in the community.

A [commentary on the role of NSPs in Hep C care](#) has also been published, describing the experience of Hep C treatment through an NSP in New South Wales.

A [systematic review](#) of studies assessing DAA treatment for people who inject drugs provides further evidence that DAA treatment is effective even with recent drug use.

ASHM have released a [new resource](#) aimed at breaking down the barriers of stigma and discrimination in health care services. The website contains a repository of information on blood borne virus related stigma and discrimination as well as online learning modules.

The PBS have released an [outcome statement](#) for a consultation held in December on simplifying prescription for DAAs.

UPCOMING EVENTS

HEPSpeak Training

Training is coming up in April to be involved in Hepatitis's Victoria's HEPSpeak program. This is an opportunity for people with lived experience of viral hepatitis to share their story and help change community attitudes. We encourage you to share this with any clients or people you know who may be eligible. The training is free and more information and registration can be found [here](#).

If you or anyone you know is interested or would like more information contact will@hepvic.org.au

The training will run on Saturday April 6 & Saturday April 13, 10.30am -3.30pm both days, at Hepatitis Victoria, Suite 5, 200 Sydney Rd Brunswick 3056

PLANNING FOR WORLD HEPATITIS DAY 2019!

July 28th is [World Hepatitis Day](#). The global theme for this year is "**Find the Missing Millions**".

EC Partnership will join in with this theme to undertake a campaign of testing in July to help find those still missing diagnosis in Australia. The campaign is still to be finalised but will likely involve a range of activities across sites, including testing drives and events to discuss strategies for increasing testing.

If your organisation would like to join us in this campaign please email kico.chan@burnet.edu.au.