

Bringing Hepatitis B Care Closer to Home: A Regional Telehealth Model

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Background/Approach: Culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities, particularly migrants from the Asia-Pacific region, experience a disproportionate burden of chronic hepatitis B (HBV) in Australia, with higher prevalence in remote and regional areas of Western Australia (WA). This issue is evident in the Midwest region, where the overseas-born population is growing and low HBV awareness, together with limited regional service capacity, contributes to reduced screening and treatment. This highlights the need for targeted, culturally appropriate and digitally enabled models of care.

'HepBWA' is an online portal for remote multicultural communities in WA. The portal provides access to HBV information and facilitates connection between remote communities and HepatitisWA clinical services via telehealth.

Analysis/Argument: The Midwest Needs Assessment (2022–2024) identified high demand but low access to GPs across the region. In addition, there is a lack of S100 prescribers to manage hepatitis B, further limiting access to appropriate care. Telehealth presents an important opportunity to bridge service gaps and connect patients with specialist care. National survey data also indicates strong consumer acceptance of telehealth, with 30% of Australians reporting increased preference for telehealth since COVID-19, particularly younger adults, families with children and women.

Outcome/Results: In response, the HepBWA portal was launched in July 2025 to provide access to HBV information and telehealth-enabled clinical services at the HepatitisWA Deen Clinic in Perth.

Since its launch, the portal has recorded more than 1,200 visitors with over 2,400 page views. The website was also well received by metropolitan and regional healthcare workers through presentations at online forums and workshops.

Conclusions/Applications: The next phase of the HepBWA project will aim to deliver “on-the-ground” education in the Midwest region with a focus on raising HBV awareness, and facilitating connections to the telehealth pathway. As the program matures, telehealth uptake is expected to increase, enhancing access to care in the region.

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