

Beyond the C: Strengthening Primary Care Pathways for Hepatitis C Elimination

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Background:

Elimination of hepatitis C virus (HCV) as a public health threat is within Australia's reach. Australia has committed to eliminating HCV by 2030, a goal that will save lives, prevent liver damage, and enhance overall quality of life. Since its national launch in November 2022, Beyond the C has actively supported primary care providers through clinical auditing and quality improvement (QI) processes to identify individuals with HCV who are undiagnosed, underdiagnosed and untreated and engage them in appropriate care.

Analysis:

ASHM partnered with Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to support general practices in eliminating HCV. Practices received one-on-one guidance from ASHM's Practice Nurse Advisor to implement sustainable QI processes and enhance clinical capacity, including undertaking Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles. Educational webinars were delivered in collaboration with local health services to strengthen clinicians' knowledge and skills. Project participation was incentivised to encourage the adoption of best practices and sustainable interventions aligned with project goals.

Outcome:

As of January 2025, 27 practices have completed the project, 58 are currently enrolled and 18 have submitted expressions of interest, exceeding ASHM's target of engaging 100 practices by June 2025. The incentive increase from \$1500 to \$4000 in January 2024 sparked a 139% growth in practice enrolments in 2024 from 2023 as more PHNs promoted Beyond the C to their practice networks. Of the 752 patients tested for HCV, 82 were HCV-positive, and 112 patients were of unknown HCV status and eligible for recall. Interim analysis is currently underway, and additional findings will be presented at the conference.

Conclusions:

ASHM's individualised support to practices has been instrumental in enhancing clinical capacity in HCV auditing, closing HCV knowledge gaps, and strengthening partnerships with PHNs nationwide. Higher PHN engagement in Beyond the C has enhanced HCV treatment uptake, actively redressing health inequities experienced by priority populations and contributing to the 2030 elimination target.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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