

Models of Care Abstract Template

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NATIONAL PRISONS HEPATITIS NETWORK – FACILITATING ENHANCED INFRASTRUCTURE AND SCALE-UP OF HCV TREATMENT IN AUSTRALIAN PRISONS: TOWARDS NATIONAL ELIMINATION

Authors:

< Sheehan Y¹, Byrne M¹, Lloyd AR¹ on behalf of the National Prisons Hepatitis Network >

¹ The Kirby Institute, UNSW Sydney, Australia

Background:

Australia is making good progress towards elimination of hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection. Along with existing universal access to HCV testing, the 2016 listing of direct-acting antiviral (DAA) therapies on the Australian Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) allowed universal access to highly subsidized treatments for all individuals with HCV infection, including specific arrangements for prisoners. Australian prisons have a high prevalence (~20%), ongoing transmissions (~10% per annum), and relatively low treatment rates (less than 1% of those eligible in the interferon era). Against this backdrop, prisons been identified as a key venue for HCV treatment scale-up.

Description of model of care/intervention:

The National Prisons Hepatitis Network was established to facilitate cross-jurisdictional communication and knowledge exchange amongst key stakeholders to enhance efforts to scale-up HCV testing and treatment in Australian prisons.

Led by an Executive Committee, stakeholders engage in regular communication and hold an annual meeting to set national priorities, identify successes and key challenges, and to plan national initiatives and collaborative research.

Effectiveness:

Several initiatives have been instigated by the Network, including: a national dashboard of prison hepatitis services and DAA treatments; a national prisons hepatitis education project; and advocacy at local and national levels for key infrastructure. In the first year of DAA access, 6% of all those treated in Australia commenced in the prison sector. Across the country several prisons have reported micro-elimination. Steady improvements in DAA treatment access are evident across the majority of the ~100 prisons nationally.

Conclusion and next steps:

The NPHN has proven a successful platform for collaborative efforts, and for establishment of national agendas to support the elimination goals. Improved surveillance remains an as yet unrealized goal for the Network. This Australian initiative may serve as a template for other countries and for formation of an international network.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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