

# Finding the gap: Using notifications data to connect individuals to hepatitis C care

CONNECT-C

Nicole Matthews, Gabrielle Lindeman, Jacqui Richmond, Paul Armstrong, Freya Saich, Troy Combo, Tafireyi Marukutira, Jack Wallace, Gregory Dore, Carla Treloar, Jane Davies, Joseph Doyle, Alisa Pedrana, Margaret Hellard, Mark Stoové

A Burnet Institute initiative



Contact: Nicole Matthews, Research Coordinator Connect C, Burnet Institute, Melbourne, Australia

Email: nicole.matthews@burnet.edu.au

## Background: stalling DAA treatment rates

We need to do more to find and support remaining cases.

As Australia approaches its 2030 hepatitis C (HCV) elimination target and cases become harder to find, it will become increasingly important to enhance health pathways to ensure all historical and new diagnoses are linked to care and treatment.

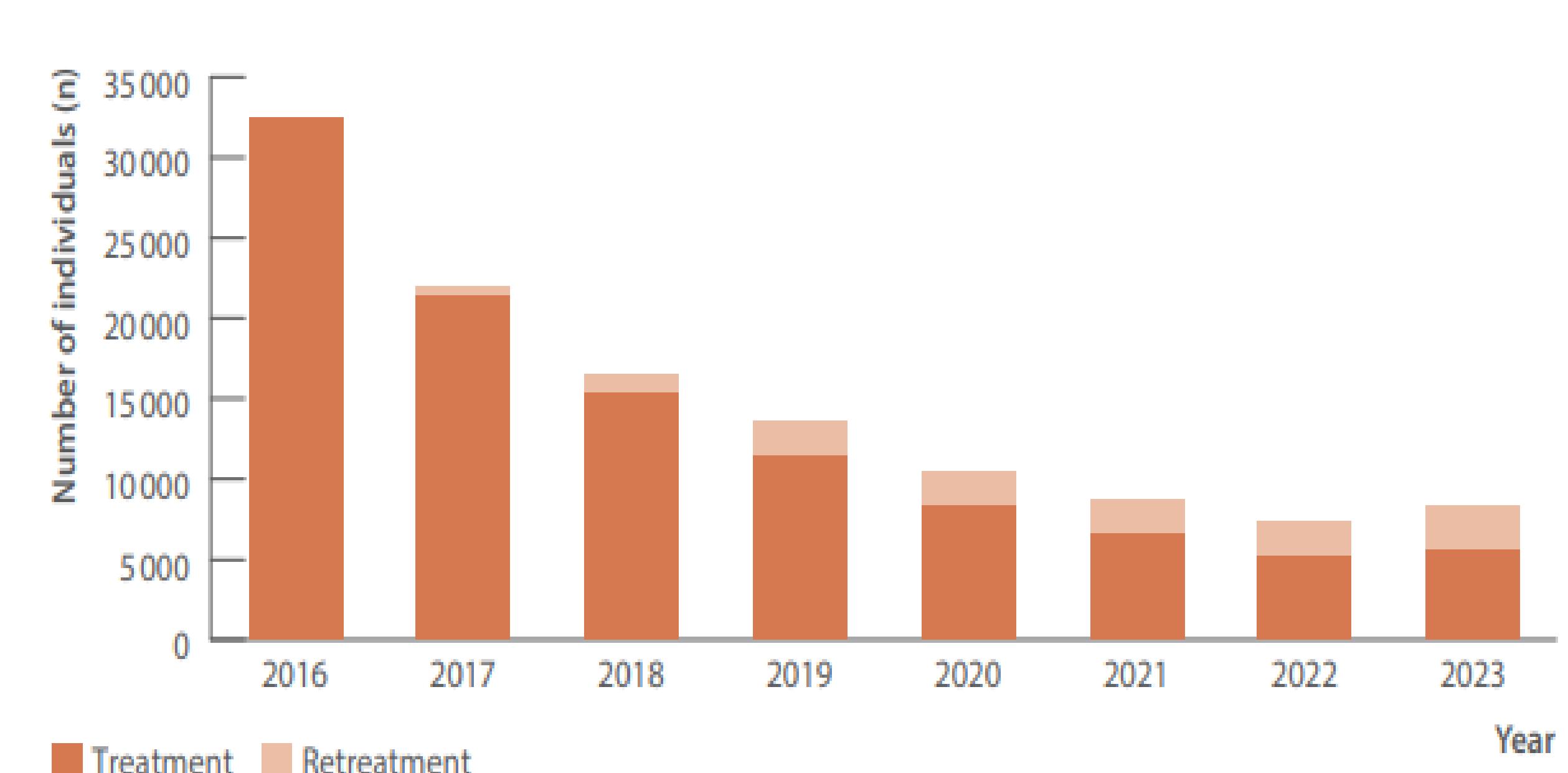
## Our approach: leverage notification data

We have access to powerful data – can we use it as an opportunity to connect people to treatment?

Connect C aims to foster the sustainable use of HCV notifications data held by health departments to link those diagnosed with HCV to treatment.

We prioritise building linkages between stakeholders through in-person and online forums: health departments, community organisations, and healthcare and laboratory service stakeholders.

We aim to inform community-accepted care models initiated from HCV notifications data.



**Figure 1:** Total estimated number of individuals initiating DAA treatment (including retreatment), PBS database, March 2016–December 2023  
Source: Burnet Institute and Kirby Institute. Australia's progress towards hepatitis C elimination: annual report 2024. Melbourne: Burnet Institute; 2024.

## Shared Voices, Shared Vision

We spoke to departments of health, community health organisations, people with lived experience, local public health units and peak bodies.

### Consultations: key insights

#### Operational and resources

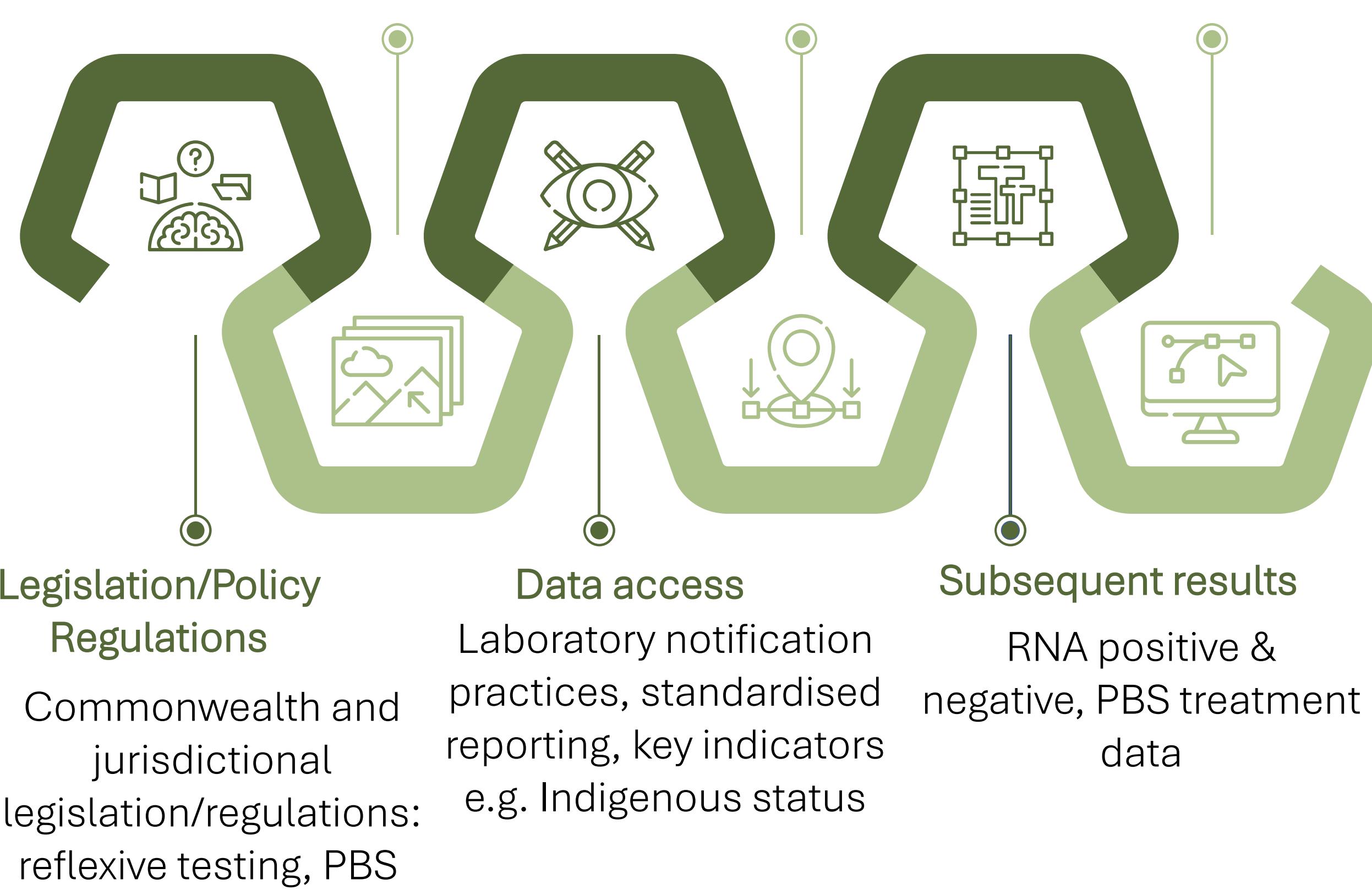
Restructures, budget, capacity, follow-up processes

#### Notification systems

System capability, accessibility and usability/reporting, reinfections challenges

#### Visibility

Ability to use results for targeted follow up



### Connect C in action

#### System capacity

Working with jurisdictions to improve system capacity to access, process and share data

#### Follow-up process

Exploring how the public health system can better prioritise follow up, record cascade outcomes, and perform enhanced surveillance

#### Data visibility

Making notifications identifiable in health surveillance system to facilitate follow up

#### Access to negative RNA results

Enhancing access to and use of negative RNA results to be able to prioritise cases for follow up

#### Community links

Conducting community consultations to develop a person-centric approach to care pathways

#### Advocacy for data access

Leading advocacy efforts for access to reflexive testing and PBS data access and linkage

### Workshops: key insights

#### Person focused models

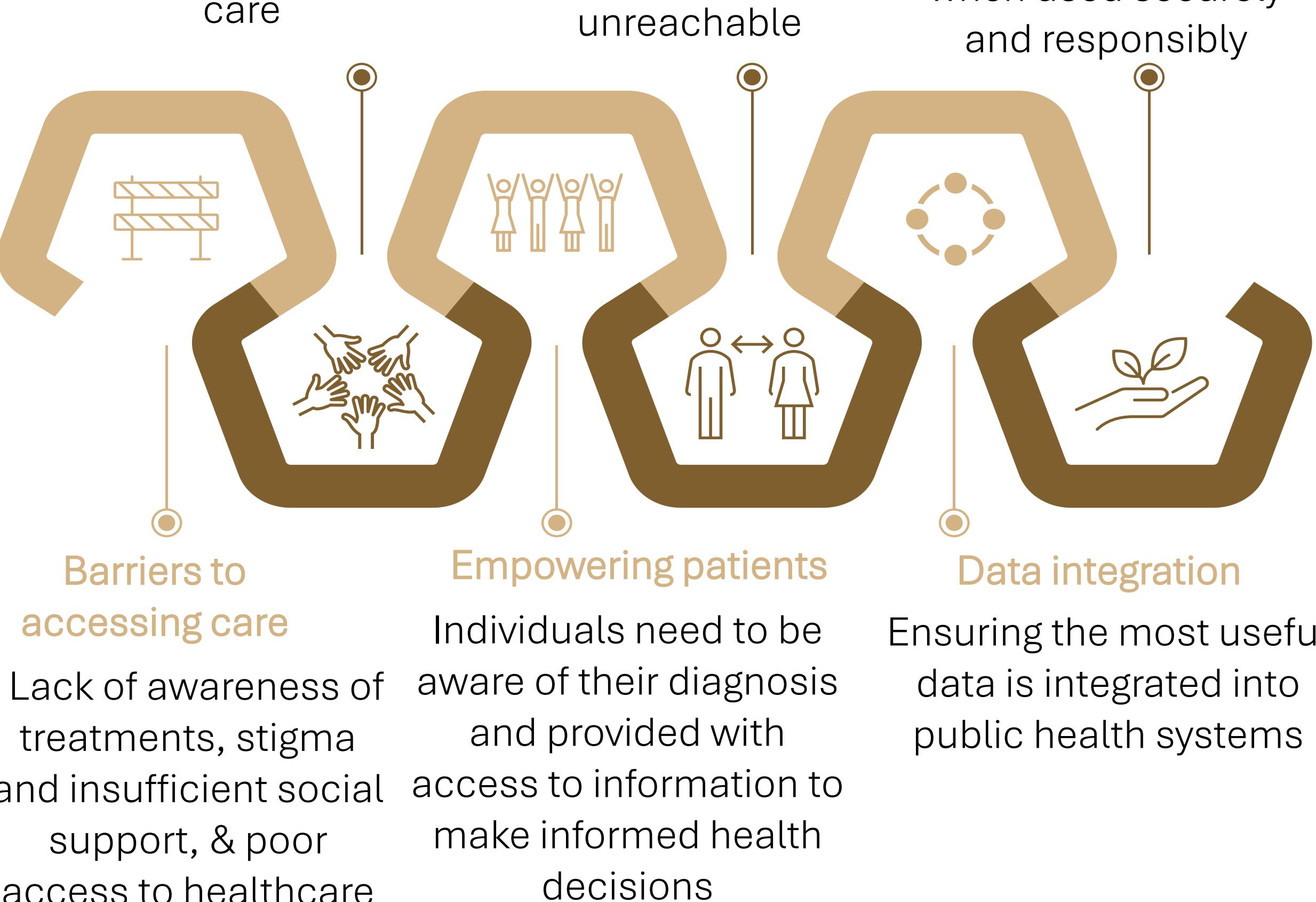
Nurse and peer-led models are optimal for using HCV notifications to support sustainable, person-centred linkage to care

#### Direct follow up

Is appropriate when not engaged in care, require additional support, or when the notifying clinician is unreachable

#### Community acceptability for follow up models

Broad support exists for using notifications data to link into care, when used securely and responsibly



### Community acceptability

- Strong community partnership and enthusiasm for developing innovative supportive models that seamlessly blend clinical expertise with optional peer support, actively foster trust, empower individuals, and directly address stigma, limited understanding, and barriers to accessing care.
- Overwhelming and enthusiastic community support (NT & QLD), with participants strongly endorsing the genuine commitment to HCV linkage to care and for the meaningful improvements being made to the notification system, rather than implementing superficial fixes.

## Connect C's next steps

- Continue collaboration with jurisdictions to improve systems for better data access, follow-up, and hepatitis C care reporting.
- Build on the strong ongoing commitment across the sector to work together to eliminate hepatitis C, despite limited resources, using notifications data to implement models to link people into care.
- Continue to share ideas and models through Connect C, promoting change and collaboration between jurisdictions.
- We will continue facilitating collaboration and knowledge sharing to strengthen partnerships and drive innovation, with a national sharing event planned for the end of the year.