

National Consensus Statement on Hepatitis B Priorities: A Community-Led Initiative by Hepatitis B Voices Australia

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Background: Australia's response is falling short: significant gaps in diagnosis, treatment and retention in care remain despite commitments to Hepatitis B elimination. A key limitation is the limited and inconsistent integration of community perspectives into priority setting and decision-making. To address this gap, Hepatitis B Voices Australia is leading the development of the first National Community Consensus Statement on Hepatitis B Priorities, designed to center lived experience with comparison to priorities from the professional sector to highlight gaps in the national response.

Argument: Traditional expert-driven priority-setting may reinforce existing blind spots arising from research biases, fragmented health systems, and entrenched inequities. The Delphi method provides a structured approach to integrate diverse forms of knowledge and values. Rather than suppressing disagreement, it treats divergence as informative, identifying tensions between priorities, feasibility, and lived realities. This process supports more transparent, representative, and accountable decision-making.

Outcome: A modified parallel Delphi process is used to develop national hepatitis B priorities, integrating lived experience and professional knowledge. Two panels operate concurrently: a Community Panel of people with lived experience of hepatitis B (n=30) and a Professions Panel of clinicians, researchers, policymakers, and industry representatives (n=30). Across Rounds 1 and 2, panels independently generate and rate priorities within four domains: clinical care, research, policy and law, and community services. In Round 3, priorities are consolidated, classified as shared or panel-specific, and re-rated following structured cross-panel reflection. In Round 4, the Community Panel ranks the final national priority set while the Professions Panel applies a feasibility and translational lens, so that final priorities reflect both lived experience and implementation considerations within a unified framework.

Applications: This project establishes a community-led, nationally endorsed priority framework that elevates community-defined priorities for hepatitis B in Australia ensuring future care, research, policy, and investment are aligned with community priorities.

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