

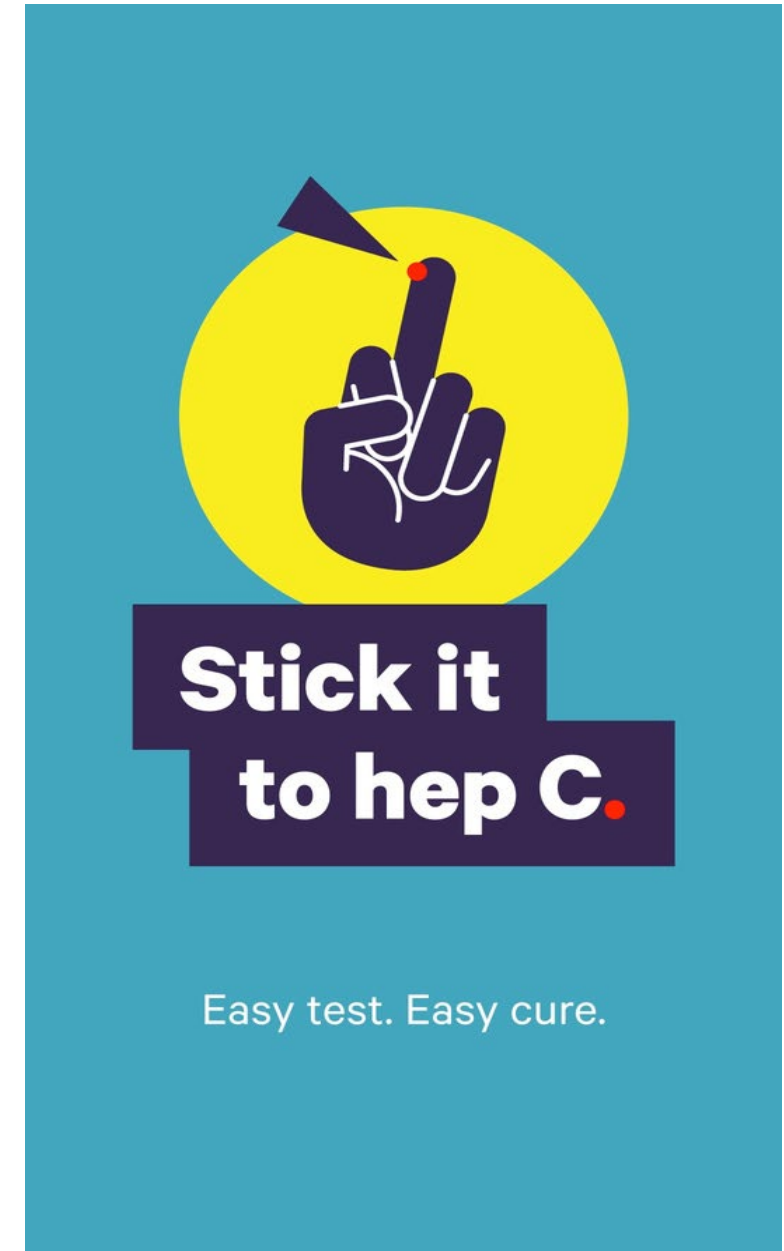
# Hepatitis C screening using point-of-care HCV-Ab and HCV-RNA

Central Region Hepatitis C Programme,  
Wellington, Aotearoa NZ

ASHM, August 2026

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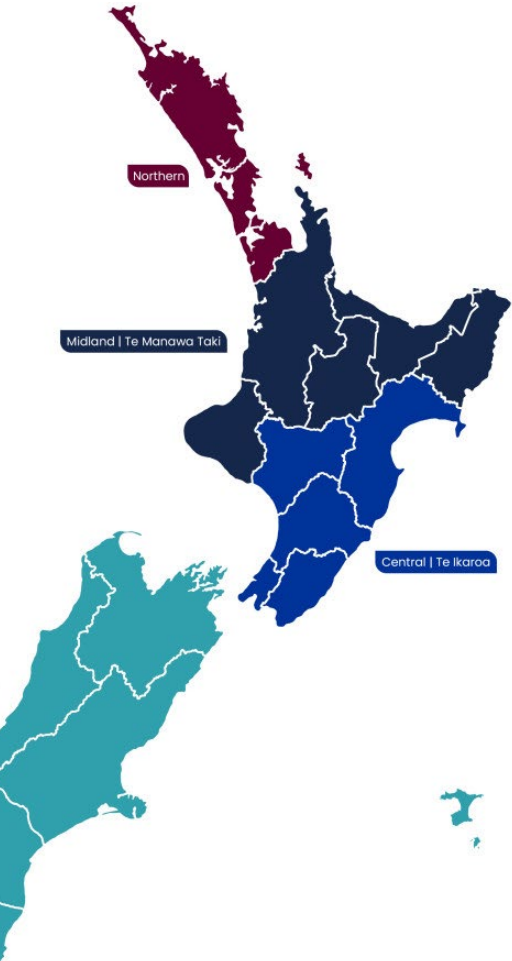


# Disclosures

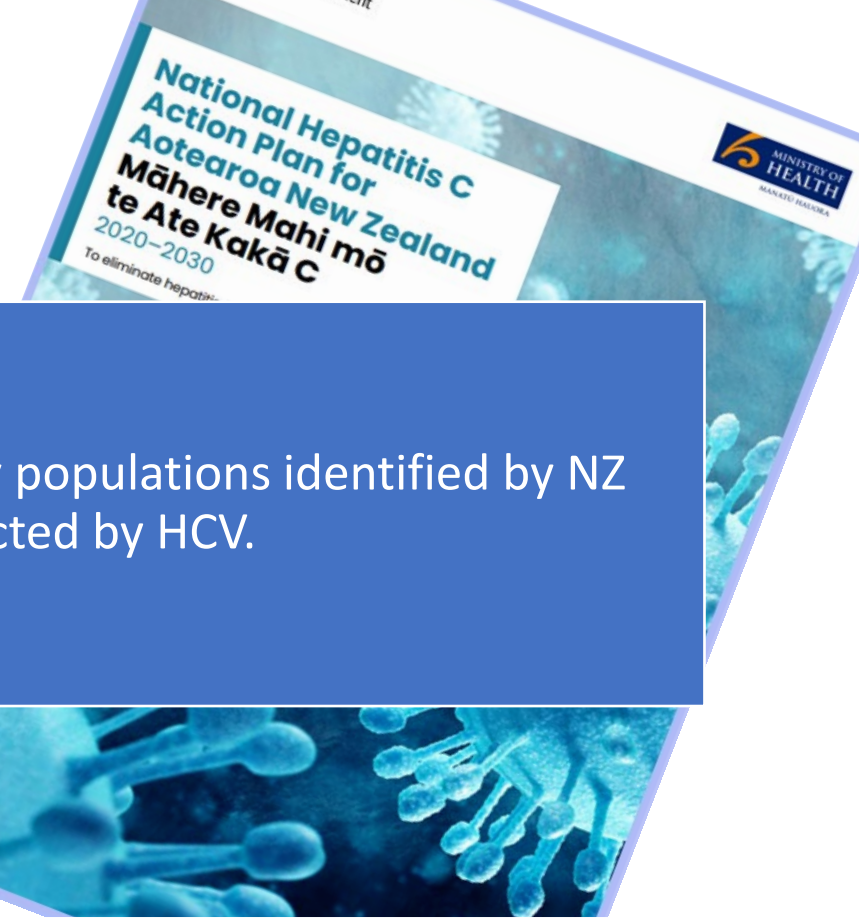
- The Central Region Hep C Programme acknowledges funding support from Abbvie for community HCV-Ab screening kits and staff professional development
- Bridget Leppien, Programme Manager is a board member for DHDP (Drugs & Health Development Project) who provide needle exchange services through the lower North Island, Aotearoa NZ

# Central Region Hep C Programme: **Service Overview**

- FREE community-based hepatitis C assessment and treatment services throughout the lower North Island.
- Mobile team that work alongside and fund contracted providers and other community-based services
  - **Funding for GP & NP's** to provide free treatment consultation for patients
  - **Community fibroscan service**, accepting referrals from GP's and community providers.
  - **Hepatitis C screening** targeting at-risk communities via needle exchanges, pharmacies, Community Corrections, kaupapa Māori and community providers
  - **Support patients with treatment** (Maviret), providing supply without prescription and support to complete treatment, specialist oversight.
  - **Education and support** to increase the awareness of hepatitis C risk, harm and stigma reduction, and improve links & uptake to treatment.



# Health Equity – who to target?



People who inject drugs, been in Corrections, and Māori are priority populations identified by NZ Hep C Action Plan as being disproportionately affected by HCV.



The Hep C Prog has prioritised these populations by:

Implementing peer-led and nurse-led clinics in needle exchanges

Providing pop-up screening at Community Corrections

Education and clinical support of prison nurses and needle-exchange peer workers

Partnering with kaupapa Māori providers

# Service Delivery

- Mobile team offering HepC screening to targeted communities and events, and collaborate with:
- Needle exchanges
- Community Corrections
- Community and kaupapa Māori providers
- Pharmacies, primary health practices
- Workplaces & occ health providers,
- Mental health & addictions services
- Hospital specialists



Franklin & Melissa at Feilding Community Corrections with *Ngā Kaitiaki o Ngati Kauwhata* Christine and Moana in May 2026

# Tools of the trade — to increase access & reduce stigma

- ***Bioline* HCV-Ab screening for exposure**

- finger-prick test (10uL)
- 5 min result
- Peer / community delivered
- High sensitivity & specificity

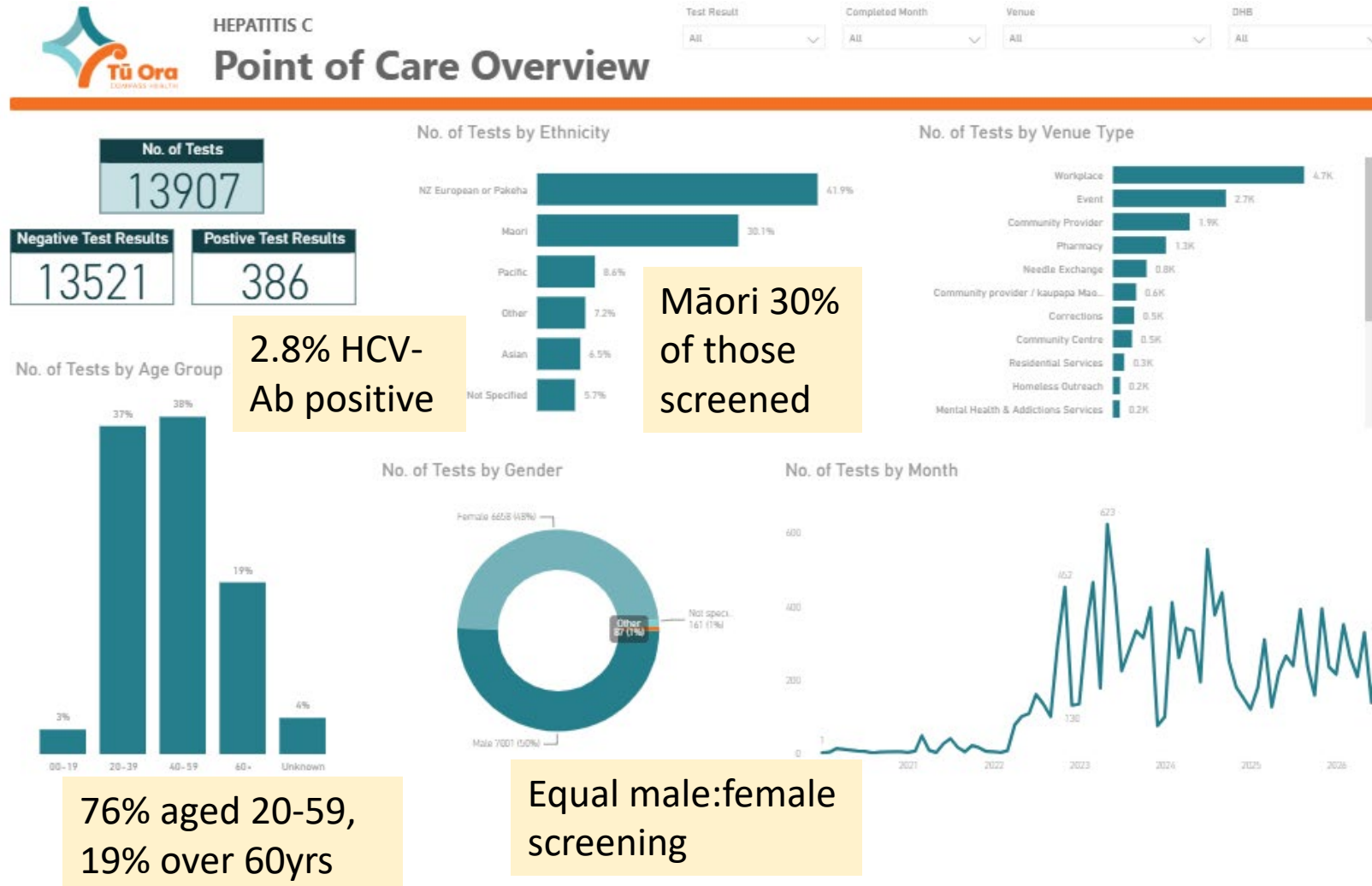


- ***Cobas* HCV-RNA plasma separation card**

- finger-prick blood collection (100UL, EDTA)
- Stable for transport – post or courier (3-4 weeks)
- Peer / community collected
- 96% accurate for detection down to 1,000 IU/ml



# How do we measure what we do?



All HCV-Ab POCT data is entered into Sharefile via an online portal, and populated onto a dashboard using Power BI

Indici (PMS system) measurements used to capture Maviret supply & fibroscans; recently adding referral, contacts and discharge measurement

# Clinical Effectiveness

*Does the service deliver the right care, at the right time, with the right outcomes?*

| Clinical Service                                                                        | Measure of Effectiveness (as at May 2026)                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Targeted Hep C screening</b><br>(HCV-Ab for exposure)                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall Programme Seroprevalence = 2.8% (since July 2022)</li><li>• Oct- Dec 2025 seroprevalence = 3.2%</li><li>• Jan-Mar 2026 seroprevalence = 4.0%</li></ul> <p><i>Benchmark Seroprevalence = 0.98% (NZ 2025 study)</i></p> |
| <b>Maviret supply without prescription</b><br>(introduced July 2024)                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• July 24–July 25 n=3</li><li>• July 25–May 26 n=4</li><li>• (All patients cured of hepatitis C)</li></ul>                                                                                                                      |
| <b>HCV-RNA finger-prick collection</b><br>(plasma separation cards introduced Nov 2023) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Over 150 PSC samples processed at Wellington Hospital Awanui</li><li>• PSC cards currently 1/3 of all HCV-RNA samples processed</li></ul>                                                                                     |
| <b>Patient management in Programme</b><br>(Service introduced Dec 2022)                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of patients HCV-Ab+ in contact with service =360</li><li>• Number of patients treated since Dec 2022 = 56 *#</li><li>• Number of patients currently in preassessment/ on Tx = 13</li></ul>                             |

# Summary: Central Region Hep C Programme

## *delivery strategies*



Co-design service around priority populations



Measure what you do to track progress and guide changes



Use opportunities to network and collaborate



Think outside the square to reduce stigma and barriers to care



Thank you, please feel welcome to contact us or leave comments using this feedback form