

Prison transition linkage to Hepatitis C care between Correctional Centres and Community Health Service in Queensland 6 years on

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Background/Approach:

The prevalence of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) is higher in the prisoner population than the general population. With the increase of people being tested and treated for HCV in correctional centres in Queensland (QLD), a higher population are released from prisons on HCV treatment or with a positive HCV test result and need linkage to care in the community.

Analysis/Argument:

Prison Transition Services (PTS) have been offered through QulHN prison transition workers since Feb 2019. Firstly, delivered in Southeast QLD, then expanding statewide throughout QLD in 2023. The aim is to reduce disruption of HCV treatment in clients transitioning out – or into – prison, by modelling a centralised referral pathway between all correctional centres and community service providers.

Outcome/Results:

A total of 1995 cases with 1751 individual clients have been referred into the program over the past 6 years. Nearly half of referral cases (890) come from Brisbane Women's CC (BWCC), followed by Woodford CC with 512 cases. A total of 161 medication deliveries were carried out by PTS, and 1808 intake appointments were completed with 1351 done in prisons and 457 in the community. 986 referrals were made for testing and treatment, primarily into the prison health service.

Conclusions/Applications:

Strong relationships with stakeholders within the prison health service, along with QulHN's positive reputation amongst the client group, have developed over the years and led to increased referral numbers into PTS. A key driver for this result is the impact of prison transition workers' regular presence in prison demonstrated by the relatively higher number of intake appointments in prison versus community. PTS has proven to be a vital linkage service for people needing HCV testing and treatment services once released from prison.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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