

## Pricks and Drills – Blood Borne Virus Testing in an Oral Health setting

### Authors:

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**Background/Approach:** To reach the NSW Health 2028 elimination target for hepatitis C an increase in testing is needed. We also need to think outside the square to novel settings to reach our priority populations.

**Analysis/Argument:** People from communities that would benefit from testing often access services unrelated to blood borne virus screening.

The South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) Oral Health Service provides dental treatment for adults who hold a Medicare and Commonwealth concession card. This indicates the service will be working with people who meet the eligibility criteria for Dried Blood Spot (DBS) testing pilot.

Consultation between the HIV and Related Programs (HARP) Unit and the Oral Health Service identified the Kogarah Community Dental Clinic as a site suitable for DBS testing pilot.

**Outcome/Results:** The Kogarah Community Dental Clinic partnered with the HARP Unit, with HARP staff conducting testing with patients on site over a four day period.

- 98 adults were offered a DBS
- 90% of people who agreed to a test met eligibility criteria
- 39 completed a DBS
- 80% of people had not previously tested for hepatitis C
- patient feedback survey was overwhelmingly positive

Eligibility criteria for testing varied with the culturally and linguistically diverse community being successfully targeted. Over 30% of participants also identified contact with mental health services and a smaller proportion had experience of homelessness and contact with Community Corrections.

**Conclusions/Applications:** DBS testing is successful in novel settings.

Services providing health care that is unrelated to blood borne virus screening are valuable partners in working toward the hepatitis C elimination goal.

DBS testing is acceptable to clients in non-traditional settings.

DBS testing in these unusual settings has the potential to reach key priority populations who have not tested before.

The results from this project are being used to inform testing opportunities across the district.

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