

ABSTRACT TITLE:

It's Your Right: Empowering People who Use Drugs to Prevent, Test & Treat on Their Own Terms

AUTHORS:

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Background/Approach:

People who inject drugs (PWID) remain a priority population for hepatitis C virus (HCV) elimination, but continue to experience barriers to HCV harm reduction, testing and treatment. Custodial settings account for an increasing proportion of HCV treatment initiations nationally, however limited access to safe and effective harm reduction contributes to high re-infection rates.

It's Your Right (IYR) 2 is a federally funded, peer-led HCV health promotion campaign delivered in partnership by the Burnet Institute's ECA (Eliminate Hepatitis C Australia) and national drug user peak body AIVL.

Analysis/Argument:

Building on the campaign's first iteration, IYR 2 capitalises on the service-delivery record of drug user organisations (DUOs) and the expertise of peer workers with lived/living experience of drug use and HCV to enhance engagement of PWID into HCV testing and treatment, including people with incarceration experience.

Outcome/Results:

Between February and July 2026 eight DUOs will implement IYR. DUOs will deliver IYR in prisons in five jurisdictions and HCV testing in one prison. Eight DUOs will also deliver IYR in post-release services as an alternate way of reaching people who have been incarcerated.

Conclusions/Applications:

This presentation will showcase the campaign strategy and implementation of IYR, with a focus on the experience working in custodial settings for the first time. We will highlight the tailored models for each DUO and reflect on real-time insights from the campaign rollout and evaluation, including qualitative data from implementing services. The dynamic and restrictive environment of custodial settings has also provided challenges and limitations for peer DUOs to provide effective harm reduction, hepatitis C testing and treatment. The showcase will explore the facilitators and barriers in reaching people across prison and post-release settings.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: Please include a disclosure of interest statement in your abstract for any contributions received relevant to this work. Please see the example below:

“The Australian Drug Users League (AIVL) recognise the considerable contribution that partner Burnet (AC Australia) and our member organisations and their partners have made to the roll out of the campaign. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.”

AI STATEMENT

None