

A District-Wide Approach to Hepatitis C Testing in Community Corrections

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Background/Approach:

Community Corrections services are a key setting for hepatitis C (HCV). Many people attending belong to several priority populations and are at increased risk for HCV.

Analysis/Argument:

There is a need for easily accessible, proactive and flexible HCV testing and treatment options for people attending Community Corrections.

The South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) has established a successful partnership with all Community Corrections offices in the area. The three services across SESLHD support different cohorts working with over 1200 people. A district-wide approach was taken to planning and negotiating the clinics. This included staff education and navigating models of care with the district's clinical services. Clinics commenced in early 2023 using both Point Of Care Testing (POCT) or Dried Blood Spot (DBS) testing.

SESLHD's Community Corrections model of care;

- Incentivises both HCV testing and the care cascade with vouchers
- Provides continuity of care from testing through to treatment and sustained virologic response (SVR) with a nurse led model of care

- Provides the option of Work Development Orders (WDO) as an added incentive
- Offers the option of follow up appointments on site or via telephone whenever possible
- Has allowed the piloting of providing same day scripting/medication
- Involves a partnership with Hepatitis NSW peer workers who support client engagement

Outcome/Results:

HCV prevalence in people attending Community Corrections in SESLHD is higher than the general population at 5.7%. Fifty per cent of people commenced treatment and of these 13% have confirmed SVR.

Conclusions/Applications:

HCV prevalence in Community Corrections in SESLHD is six times higher than in the general community. This reinforces the need for providing HCV testing and linkage to care in this priority setting.

Enhancing the model of care to include WDOs and same day scripting is beginning to demonstrate benefits in client retention

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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