

# **A community-led initiative to improve linkage to care for people living with hepatitis B**

## **Authors:**

Kudell M<sup>1</sup>, Clynes L<sup>1</sup>, Pizzie A<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hepatitis Australia

## **Background:**

More than 200,000 people in Australia are living with chronic hepatitis B, yet three-quarters are not receiving regular care. This significantly increases their risk of developing serious liver complications, including liver cancer.

## **Methodology:**

Hepatitis Australia is leading a collaborative design process to scope and pilot a National Hepatitis B Monitoring and Care Facilitation Program to address critical gaps in care by:

- **Improving access to care:** Connecting people living with hepatitis B to care, resources and support.
- **Enhancing national care coordination:** Establishing a centralised hub through HepLink to coordinate care delivery across the country.
- **Improving treatment adherence:** Offering regular blood tests, early detection of complications, and timely referrals to specialist care.
- **Addressing health inequities:** Tailoring services to meet the diverse needs of all Australians living with hepatitis B, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people living in rural and remote areas.
- **Leveraging existing successful models:** Build upon the successes of programs like Hep B PAST in the Northern Territory, the Hepatitis Foundation of New Zealand Hepatitis B national monitoring program and the approach to NHS peer navigation taken by the Hepatitis C Trust in the UK.

## **Conclusions:**

This project will look at new ways to build new opportunities to connect with people at the point of diagnosis, whether that is through the migration pathway, pregnancy or primary care testing and support them to remain in linked to appropriate treatment, care and support. Linkage to care is a key priority in the forthcoming National Hepatitis B Strategy and is a target which will measure Australia's progress to elimination. Innovative approaches to addressing current gaps in linkage to care and treatment are essential, and this project endeavors to work across the sector to achieve this.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

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Hepatitis Australia recognises the need for transparency in disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.