

# REORIENTATION OF HEPATITIS C SERVICES IN VICTORIA

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## Background/Approach

To increase access to the hepatitis C direct acting antivirals (DAAs) following their listing on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme in 2016, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (Department) reoriented delivery of a range of hepatitis C services.

## Analysis/Argument

The Department established its Hepatitis C Elimination Committee; commenced reorientating the Victorian Integrated Hepatitis C Services; established the Victorian Viral Hepatitis Nurse Practitioner (VNPP) Project; accelerated development of online hepatitis C clinical pathways through the Victorian Primary Health Networks; and implemented an extensive workforce development program for general practitioners, nurses; community and peer organisations, and pharmacists.

## Outcomes/Results

The National Hepatitis C Mapping Project estimates that 22% percent of Victorians with chronic hepatitis C initiated treatment between March 2016 – February 2017, which is above the national average.

A component of the Department's efforts to renew approaches to hepatitis C elimination was evaluating the Integrated Hepatitis C Service; it recommended a nurse-led model of care that closely links specialists to primary healthcare clinicians to increase community-based testing and treatment.

The establishment of the VNPP aims to expand the nursing workforce that is able to prescribe hepatitis C drugs. Two health services have been funded in 2018 to develop nurse-led models of care and to support equitable access across locations and settings.

The hepatitis C health pathway is widely used, being the most frequently accessed of all clinical pathways available.

## Conclusions

Through embracing the opportunity to eliminate hepatitis C with universal access to the DAAs, we can reduce the burden of hepatitis C and limit rising rates of liver cancer. The Department will continue to guide implementation, in partnership with partners, and monitor progress towards outcomes in its *Victorian Hepatitis C Strategy 2016 – 2020* to ensure it is on track to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health concern by 2030.