

**The National Hepatitis Infoline providing better access to nationally coordinated, localised, no cost, community and needs based support anywhere in Australia.**

**Authors:**

Kudell M<sup>1</sup>, Abrey J<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hepatitis Australia

**Background/Approach:**

People affected by viral hepatitis experience barriers in access to testing, treatment, care, and support including stigma, confidentiality concerns, language spoken, health system navigation, migration status, Medicare eligibility, and cultural and gender issues.

The national response is not on track to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030. A risk of leaving people behind meant the National Hepatitis Infoline (NHIL) was enhanced to fill critical gaps in knowledge and service delivery, and address access barriers.

**Analysis/Argument:**

NHIL is a free, low-barrier service providing accurate hepatitis information, brief interventions, peer support, referral and linkage to support, health system navigation, individual advocacy, and information and workforce support.

People affected by viral hepatitis (including family and friends) and workers can access NHIL by phone, email, text, webchat, or face-to-face.

**Outcome/Results:**

In its first 12 months NHIL provided more than 10,000 occasions of service nationally, responding to demand from community and demand generated by national activities.

NHIL features Australia's first national community hepatitis service delivery data set (collecting data on service utility, service user demographics, information and support needs, services provided and user satisfaction) complemented by qualitative insights on community-level needs, issues and trends. These data help inform national policy, monitoring and implementation of the National Strategies.

NHIL is reaching the right people; those accessing NHIL are broadly consistent with the profile of people living with hepatitis C (e.g. men over 40) and with National Strategy priority populations (particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from culturally, linguistically and ethnically diverse backgrounds).

**Conclusions/Applications:**

NHIL is already a key piece of national response infrastructure, operating at capacity, filling a critical service delivery gap through community-based support, and contributing to the evidence-base regarding service utility, service user demographics, and viral hepatitis information and support needs.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

The Australian Department of Health and Aged Care funded the co-design of an enhanced National Hepatitis Infoline in 2021-2022 and subsequently its ongoing implementation. Hepatitis Australia acknowledges the critical funding through which governments support the national response – including peak and other community organisations – and that of industry partners supporting professional and research activities. Hepatitis Australia recognises the need for transparency in disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.