

## Enhancing Hepatitis C Testing and Treatment through Community-Academic Collaboration: A Model of Care

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**Background:** In 2021, Hepatitis ACT partnered with Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation (CAHMA) and successfully operated a Nurse Practitioner-led clinic for hepatitis C (hep C) testing and treatment in a community-based setting. A new model of care was enhanced by a collaboration with CAHMA, the University of New South Wales (UNSW), and the Kirby Institute in June 2022 to integrate fingerstick Point of Care Testing (POCT) for hep C into community testing. Outreach testing was conducted at various locations frequented by at-risk populations.

**Description of Model of Care/Intervention:** Collaborating with the Kirby Institute to provide fingerstick hep C testing brought about several benefits, including straightforward testing methods, rapid results, and the use of a fully mobile testing setup. Outreach testing for hep C is available at diverse sites such as dosing pharmacies, homelessness hubs, government housing facilities, and community shelters, effectively reaching and serving at-risk populations.

**Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation:** Over the past year, Hepatitis ACT and CAHMA successfully organised numerous outreach hep C testing events. Additionally, since June 2022, the organisations have conducted over 370 tests through POCT at various locations demonstrating the initiative's effectiveness in reaching at-risk populations and its successful implementation within the community.

**Conclusion and Next Steps:** The collaboration has resulted in an improved model of care for hep C testing and treatment. Moving forward, Hepatitis ACT is committed to sustaining and strengthening partnerships to ensure continued access to hep C testing, support, and treatment as an essential to effectively address the challenges of hep C and advancing towards the goal of elimination by 2030.

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