

## **Nurses reducing barriers to treatment critical to achieving hepatitis C elimination by 2030**

Van der Jagt J<sup>1</sup>, [Hill S](#)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> North Coast Public Health Unit, <sup>2</sup> ASHM Health

### **Background/Approach:**

Analysis of the NSW Hepatitis C Remote Prescribing Program year 3 data clearly demonstrates nurses and nurse practitioners (NPs) are integral to the program's successful outcomes. The nurse-led, patient-centred model of care eliminated many barriers and expedited treatment initiation in hard-to-reach populations across varied settings.

### **Analysis/Argument:**

Experienced nurses assessed people at risk of hepatitis C then referred the information remotely to participating NPs who reviewed the information and prescribed treatment. During 2023, there were 6 Medical Practitioners, 4 NPs and 21 nurses across NSW registered in the program.

### **Outcome/Results:**

In 2023, 14 nurses remotely referred 107 people who were prescribed hepatitis C treatment by three NPs. Patient settings included Drug and Alcohol services, General Practice, Liver Clinics, Needle and Syringe Programs, Point-of-Care and dried blood spot testing sites, Mental Health services, and homelessness services. This paper presents the findings of a survey conducted in March-April 2024 seeking participating nurses' feedback about the program and opportunities for future enhancement. Of the 12 survey respondents, 92% reported receiving timely responses to their Remote Consultation Request for Initiation of Treatment forms. Over 83% of survey respondents rated the program as being very effective and agreed the time taken to complete the form was reasonable. When asked about the benefits for clients, responses included "This program is an integral part of our clinic. It is a simple process that is easy to use and a flexible way of getting more clients on treatment in a fast and patient-centred way. "

### **Conclusions/Applications:**

Nurses across a variety of settings and locations can streamline testing, assessment and linkage to care utilising this program. NPs can provide quick turnaround times for treatment initiation. Participating nurses report strong support for the program. Initiatives such as this are critical to achieving hepatitis C elimination by 2030.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** None