

IT'S YOUR RIGHT: EMPOWERING PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS TO PREVENT, TEST & TREAT ON THEIR OWN TERMS

Samuel Y¹, McLeod L¹, Adamson E², Henderson C², Gibbs D², Combo T², Mercer D², Leyden E³, Dicka J⁴, Endemann S⁵, Holly C⁶, Dessauer P⁷, Gava P⁷, Hinton R⁸, Llyod B⁸, Ebdon E⁹, Hughes L¹⁰, Pedrana A² and on behalf of the National Reference Group

AIVL Australian Injecting Drug Users League; ²Eliminate Hepatitis C Australia (EC Australia), Burnet Institute ³Queensland Injectors Health Network, ⁴Harm Reduction Victoria; ⁵Northern Territory AIDS and Hepatitis Council; ⁶Hepatitis SA; ⁷Peer Based Harm Reduction Western Australia; ⁸NSW Users and AIDS Association; ⁹Tasmanian Users Health and Support League; ¹⁰Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation & Advocacy; ¹¹Department of Epidemiology and Preventative Medicine, Monash University

Background:

People who inject drugs (PWID) remain a priority population for hepatitis C virus (HCV) elimination, but continue to experience barriers to HCV harm reduction, testing and treatment. Custodial settings account for an increasing proportion of HCV treatment initiations across Australia, however limited access to safe and effective harm reduction contributes to high re-infection rates.

It's Your Right 2 (IYR2) is the second iteration of a peer-led HCV health promotion campaign funded by the Australian federal government and delivered in partnership by Burnet Institute's ECA (Eliminate Hepatitis C Australia) program and national drug user peak body, Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL).

Description of model of care/intervention/program:

IYR 2 capitalises on the service-delivery record of drug user organisations (DUOs) and the expertise of peer workers with lived/living experience of drug use to enhance engagement of PWID into HCV testing and treatment.

The campaign was designed to reach people in custodial settings by providing health promotion materials and peer-led testing and education through eight AIVL member organisations. Campaign materials include tailored user-generated, strengths-based text and visuals for posters, staff t-shirts and giveaways for PWID were permitted in custodial settings.

Effectiveness:

Eight DUOs will implement *IYR2* between February and July 2026 and will deliver *IYR2* in prisons in five jurisdictions and HCV testing in one prison. Eight DUOs will also deliver *IYR* in post-release services as an alternate way of reaching people who have been incarcerated.

Conclusion and next steps:

This presentation will showcase peer-led HCV health promotion and service delivery in custodial settings, highlighting eight tailored models and reflecting on insights from *IYR2*'s rollout and evaluation. The dynamic and restrictive environment of custodial settings provides challenges for delivering harm reduction and HCV services. We will explore facilitators and barriers for reaching people across custodial and post-release settings.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

"The Australian Drug Users League (AIVL) recognise the considerable contribution that partner Burnet (AC Australia) and our member organisations, and their partners have made to the roll out of the campaign. We also recognise the need for transparency and disclosure of potential conflicts of

interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations. Partners received funding for this work from the Australian Centre for Disease Control”