

## Background:

The Hepatitis C Community Clinic (HCCC), a free service, opened in early 2009, alongside the Needle Exchange in Christchurch, New Zealand to improve access to hepatitis C (HCV) care for people who inject drugs (PWID).

The employment of a social worker was considered essential as HCV was often accompanied by addiction, stigma, discrimination and psychosocial issues.

Stigma

Discrimination

PWID

Mental Health

## Results:

The social worker currently manages a case load of 193 clients. Recent data suggests 72.5% of our client base receive a social welfare benefit and 22% identify as Maori. Other determinants of health and well-being also affect our clients and these have been exacerbated by the major earthquakes experienced in Christchurch in 2010 and 2011. As well as managing their HCV journey, the role encompasses intensive support when required. In 2015 the clinic had a 95% first specialist appointment attendance rate. There has been an increase in clients on treatment, increase in referrals from GP's and treatment providers for extra support.

## Conclusions:

The Hepatitis C Specialist Social Work Role has improved HCV outcomes for clients with a wide range of issues. The case management model within a multi-disciplinary team has facilitated the process of engagement, assessment and intervention and contributed to an increase in clients accessing treatment.

# ONE OF A KIND IN NEW ZEALAND



## THE HEPATITIS C SPECIALIST SOCIAL WORKER IN A COMMUNITY CLINIC

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## CEP- "Everybody's Business, But Nobody's Priority"\*

### Target Population:

- Clients with Complex needs.
- Co-existing mental health problems and problematic substance use.
- Refugees and Migrants
- Youth
- Clients with disabilities and special needs.

### Knowledge:

- Community Resources – housing, peer support, mental health support
- Hepatitis C
- Harm Reduction
- Addiction and AOD services
- Welfare Entitlements

### Skills:

- Advocacy
- Brokerage –connecting to resources
- Problem Solving
- Engagement and Communication Skills
- Negotiation

### Key Tasks:

- HCV screening and Assessment
- HCV pre and post testing discussions
- HCV information – testing, results, treatment
- Referrals to and liaison with AOD services and social agencies
- Referrals for HCV treatment
- Education – living with HCV and cirrhosis, HCV treatment options
- HCV presentations and education forums
- Support on HCV treatment, adherence to treatment, recovery and rehabilitation
- Initiating and monitoring current treatment in the Clinic
- Harm reduction
- Motivational Interviewing
- Relapse Prevention
- Leadership and mentoring of team members

\*Hawkings, C. a.(2010).  
Dual Diagnosis Toolkit: Mental Health and Substance Misuse.  
London: Rethink and Turning Point (Online).