

Hep C factsheets: Council overview



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Introduction

The Hepatitis C Council of NSW is an independent, charitable, community-based membership organisation offering assistance to people affected by hep C. We are overseen by a Board of Governance elected annually by our membership. Our primary funder is the NSW Health Department.

The range of people we work with is wide. It includes people with hep C and their partners, family and friends; healthcare and welfare workers; peer organisations and individuals; government departments; private sector employers and members of the NSW public.

Service delivery

We currently provide assistance in the following ways:

- We operate the *Hep C Helpline*, a telephone information and support service that gives people affected by hep C the opportunity to discuss their concerns in a confidential, safe and non judgmental setting.
- We also operate the *NSW Prisons Hep C Helpline*. This service is the result of collaboration with the NSW Department of Corrective Services and Justice Health, and caters for the needs of NSW prisoners, their families and friends, as well as correctional staff.
- We operate the *Hep Connect* peer support project which enables people to speak by phone with trained volunteers who have experiences of living with hep C, including treatment.
- We distribute information booklets, brochures and factsheets about hep C. Several are produced by us and these are endorsed by NSW Health and regularly reviewed and updated. Other resources come from Hepatitis Australia, ASHM and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. This range of resources is promoted and distributed across NSW to people affected by HCV and to a wide range of health, welfare and education services.
- We publish a quarterly magazine, *The Hep C Review*, that provides up-to-date information on clinical developments, political and legal issues, support services, membership information and other hep C-related news. *The Hep C Review* is also an important source of peer support, and is circulated widely in NSW correctional centres as well as within the broader communities affected.
- We maintain a website www.hepatitisc.org.au which provides a range of general and detailed hep C information.
- Our Education and Development team can support organisations in the enhancement of their response to hep C, through educational and capacity building initiatives. Our customised educational workshops and services can be designed for groups or whole organisations. This can include in-service education, training sessions, planning workshops and speakers.
- We undertake community development activities by providing information and support directly to particular affected communities, assisting key agencies to enhance their hep C service capacity and by encouraging the participation of people affected by hep C in the planning and delivery of quality services.
- We operate a library loan service of hep C text books and information videos. These cover general and specific information about living with hep C, drug treatment, complementary therapies and how hep C affects the liver.

This factsheet was produced by the Hepatitis C Council of NSW and was last reviewed in Jan 2008

Hep C Helpline and *HepConnect* (peer support): 02 9332 1599 / 1800 803 990

Web info: www.hepatitisc.org.au Web peer support: www.hepcaustralia.org

The Hepatitis C Council of NSW Inc is a community-based, non-government organisation, funded by the NSW Health Dept.

- Through a partnership approach, we liaise with key organisations and individuals, ensuring that the needs of people affected by hep C are taken into consideration. This also involves the development and review of government and workplace policies and procedures.
- We operate the *C-een & Heard* speakers service, an initiative where people affected by hep C are trained to share their experiences with audiences of health care and other workers. The service aims to humanise hep C and increase awareness and understanding of the condition.
- We operate a Media Speakers Service that enables people with hep C to share their experiences when television, radio or print journalists are seeking a personal perspective about hep C.
- We initiated and continue to support the *hepCaustraliasia* internet peer support forum.
- We play a key role in the work of Hepatitis Australia, the national peak body of all state and territory based hepatitis councils.
- We are advised by our Medical and Research Advisory Panel, a group of key Australian specialist clinicians and researchers in the fields of hepatology, gastroenterology, social, epidemiological and clinical research. This panel contributes to the development of our information resources.

To join the Council, call the *Hep C Helpline* and we will send you an information pack, a membership form and a copy of the latest magazine. Alternatively, become a member online by visiting www.hepatitisc.org.au/hepcouncil/member.html

The organisation provides opportunity for volunteer work. Please contact us if you are interested, whether for work experience or personal development, for a few hours a week or a few days a year.

Also see

Australian snapshot (factsheet)

Council history (factsheet)

About the Council - www.hepatitisc.org.au/hepcouncil/about.html

- This factsheet was developed by the Hepatitis C Council of NSW.

Membership

To receive *The Hep C Review* magazine on a quarterly basis and be kept informed about ongoing developments in hep C in Australia and elsewhere, please consider becoming a member of the Hepatitis C Council of NSW.