

# Strategies Supporting and Increasing Hep C Testing and Treatment for People in NSW Prisons

Author: Wilkinson S, McMahon M

## Background

NSW prisons' Common Automatic Dial List allows free calls to the *Hepatitis Infoline*. Hepatitis NSW provides verbal information via *Hepatitis Infoline* and printed resources in the prison information packs to people in NSW prisons. The resources/information packs include information about prevention of viral hepatitis transmissions, access to testing and treatment within custodial settings.

People in NSW prisons are assessed and treated under Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network's (Justice Health's) Nurse-Led Model of Care.

## Methods

Strategies supporting and increasing testing and treatment include:

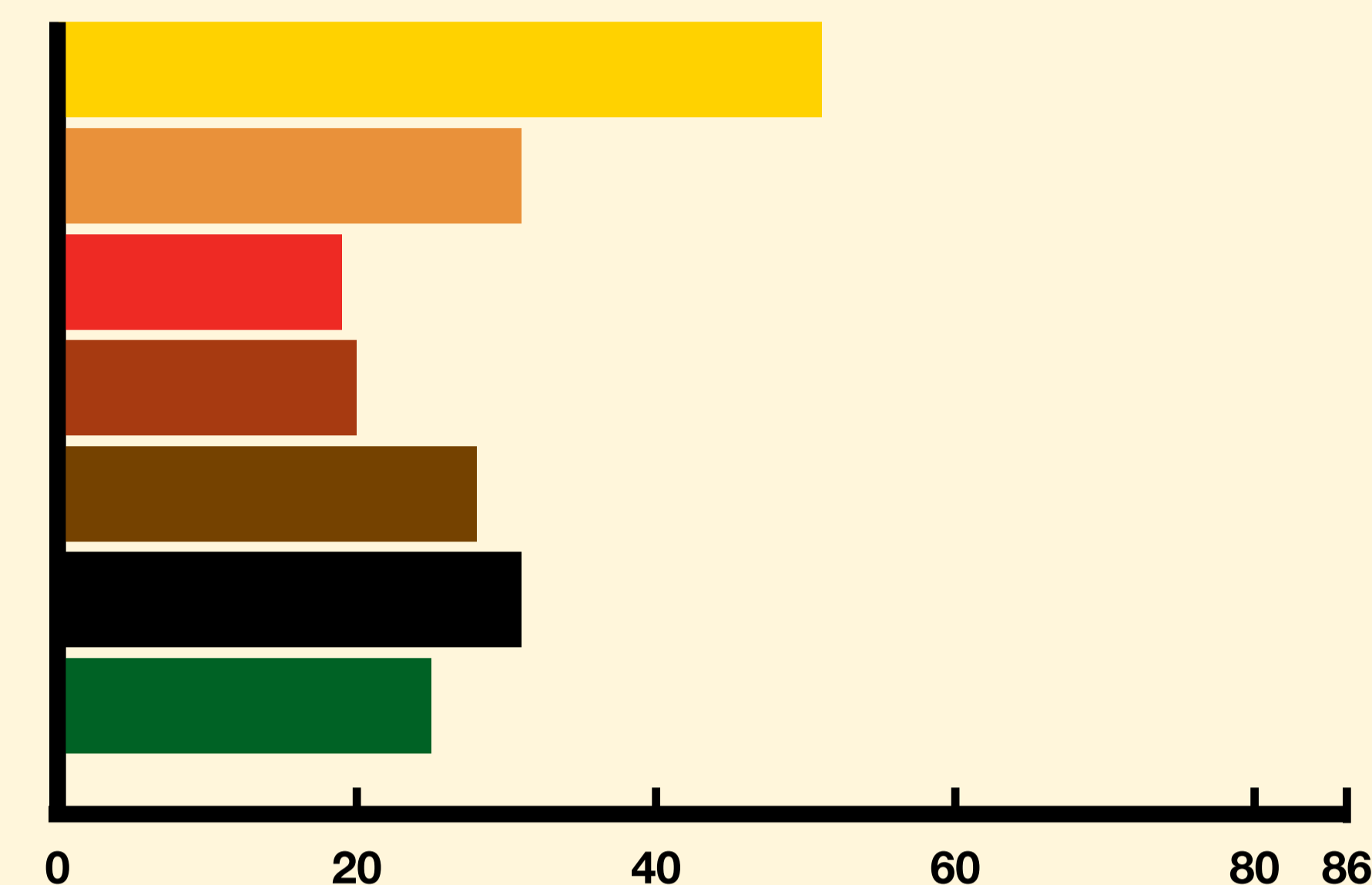
- Practical information eg: how to ask to see the nurse
- Encouragement to "refer your mates"
- Hepatitis Information Packs with resources
  - Educational playing cards
  - Tx! Magazine (comic-style health promotion resource)
  - information on cleaning injecting equipment
  - 3 extra Hepatitis Infoline cards and 3 Treatment Infographics to give away to peers in prisons
- Feedback Forms
- "Return to Community" packs for people due for release including local GP DAA prescribers, Fibroscans, Liver Clinics, pharmacies and *Hepatitis Infoline* cards

## Results

1,626 prison originated calls were received from March 2016 to June 2017.  
590 Hepatitis Information Packs were posted to people in NSW Correctional settings.

91 Feedback Forms (45% from Aboriginal people) demonstrate people act on the information provided:

I PUT A FORM IN TO SEE THE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE TO GET BLOOD TESTS	59%	51 out of 86
I PUT A FORM IN TO SEE THE PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE ABOUT HEP C TREATMENTS	36%	31 out of 86
I STARTED TREATMENT FOR HEP C	22%	19 out of 86
I HAVE COMPLETED HEP C TREATMENT	23%	20 out of 86
I KNOW MORE ABOUT KEEPING HEALTHY WITH HEP C	33%	28 out of 86
I KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW HEP C IS PASSED ON	36%	31 out of 86
I KNOW HOW TO LESSEN THE RISK OF PASSING ON HEP C	29%	25 out of 86



### Advocacy for people in prison

After verbal consent, our staff advocate via encrypted email to Justice Health about the individual's treatment issues including:

- Eligibility
- Accessing testing
- Treatment
- Waiting list and timeframe
- Access to testing, Fibroscans and wait times for test results
- Missed doses.

142 individuals consented to advocacy resulting in testing, accessing treatment, or maintaining treatment, including people entering or exiting prison.

### Quotes from feedback forms

When asked: 'How can we make the *Hepatitis Infoline* better?'

*"You can't (make the Hepatitis Infoline better) - the person who answered the phone when I called was really helpful. They answered my questions and gave me a basic rundown about what I needed to know"* – person in prison, NSW

*"Have a flyer or a poster in every jail that tells people about your information pack, it's very good, everyone should know about it"* – person in prison, NSW

*"I appreciate all the help you guys provided"* – person in prison, NSW



## Conclusion

Testing and treatment support for people in prisons is more effective thanks to the implementation of strategies by Hepatitis NSW, evidenced by:

- Ongoing high rate of calls from prisons;
- Hepatitis Information Pack requests;
- The rise in numbers treated by Justice Health matches our increase in calls.