

HepCheck

Integrated hepatitis care for people affected by homelessness

Gary Gahan, Harm Minimisation & Hepatitis Program, HIV & Related Programs Unit, SESLHD,
 Kyle Leadbeatter, Hepatitis NSW
 Julie Smith, Matthew Talbot Hostel
 Adrienne Lucey, Homelessness Health Program, SESLHD

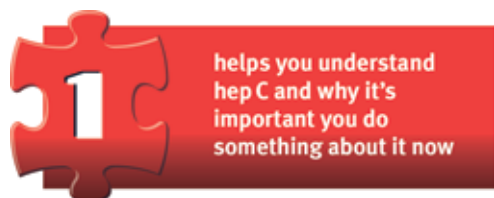
Hepatitis C imposes a significant health burden on South Eastern Sydney Local Health District and much of that burden is disproportionately borne by people affected by homelessness. Ensuring that effective treatment and care programs are available and acceptable to vulnerable populations is challenging. In order to meet this challenge, SESLHD, in partnership with key community partners has developed the **HepCheck 1-2-3** program. This innovative program is designed to integrate the work of specialist services within the homelessness space to improve health outcomes for people affected by both homelessness and viral hepatitis.

HepCheck 1-2-3 is a pioneering project in the homelessness space and a model for effective collaboration and communication in providing appropriate and effective hepatitis healthcare to people affected by homelessness.



Image: screen shot of HepCheck 123 website home page www.hepcheck.org.au

HepCheck 1-2-3 is a pioneering, collaborative project bringing together specialist health services, specialist homelessness services, community organisations and specialised health programs in South Eastern Sydney Local Health District to meet the hepatitis health needs of people experiencing homelessness



What we've achieved

■ Built a website

The www.hepcheck.org.au website was built in consultation with people experiencing homelessness and the homelessness workforce. The website serves two primary functions: a hub of plain English information on hepatitis B and C and a secure portal for assisting clients to diarise their hepatitis C journey from testing to treatment to cure.

■ Educated homelessness workforce

As part of the rollout of the **HepCheck 1-2-3** program, Hepatitis NSW have run viral hepatitis education sessions with nine specialist homelessness services in South Eastern Sydney LHD. **A total of 91 participants** reported satisfaction with and relevance of these sessions.

■ Developed pathways and referrals between homelessness services and health services

As a result of the **HepCheck 1-2-3** program, SESLHD has seen a **marked improvement** in collaboration between services particularly in the provision of hepatitis screening and care for people affected by viral hepatitis.

■ Developing e-learning modules for homelessness workforce

Thanks to a successful grant application to Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network, the **HepCheck 1-2-3** program is developing **online learning materials** for the homelessness workforce to improve their knowledge and capacity around viral hepatitis. For example, the pre-treatment assessment and administering of hepatitis C treatment are being delivered for the first time at Matthew Talbot Clinic in conjunction with St Vincent's Hospital.

- 105 participants were given a FibroScan and a hepatitis C blood test as part of the LiverLife study at the Ozanam Learning Centre. All 27 who received a positive result were referred for follow-up at the Kirketon Road Centre.
- As a result of the pathways and communication established through HepCheck 1-2-3, Matthew Talbot Clinic is now prescribing DAA treatment to clients with support from St Vincent's Hospital.
- Seven specialist health services and 12 specialist homelessness services brought together to effectively and appropriately meet the hepatitis related health needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- 91 people working in the homelessness sector educated on viral hepatitis - For example, the pre-treatment assessment and administering of hepatitis C treatment are being delivered for the first time at Matthew Talbot Clinic in conjunction with St Vincent's Hospital.