

2023

# AUSTRALIA CAN'T WAIT TO ELIMINATE HEPATITIS!

#WorldHepatitisDay #HepCantWaitAu



## 28 July is World Hepatitis Day.

This factsheet provides some useful statistics and information for World Hepatitis Day 2023 communications. We encourage you to use this information and share it with your networks. This is an opportunity to step up local, national and international efforts for people affected by viral hepatitis.

Australia is one of 194 World Health Assembly Member States who voted unanimously to eliminate hepatitis B and hepatitis C (viral hepatitis) as public health concerns by 2030. Australia has enshrined this commitment in the National Hepatitis B Strategy, the National Hepatitis C Strategy\* and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander BBV/STI Strategy 2023 – 2030\*\*. These new national strategies span from 2023-2030 and are nearing finalisation which needs to include endorsement by all Australian Health Ministers, public release and implementation funding.

We are at a crucial stage in the elimination of viral hepatitis - there is a cure for hepatitis C and a vaccine and effective treatments for hepatitis B – but the statistics in this factsheet show that many people are still missing out.

**Only half of the people living with hepatitis C have initiated direct-acting antiviral cures. A quarter of people living with hepatitis B have not been diagnosed.**

All Australian Governments have committed to eliminating hepatitis B and hepatitis C by 2030 - viral hepatitis elimination is achievable and cost-effective.

With an estimated 335,000 people in Australia living with hepatitis B or hepatitis C Australia can't wait to eliminate viral hepatitis!



Find out more about hepatitis visit: [www.hepatitisaustralia.com](http://www.hepatitisaustralia.com)  
National Hepatitis Infoline 1800 437 222

hepatitis  
australia

\*These strategies were released for public consultation in June 2023.

\*\*This strategy is due to be released for public consultation in July 2023.

# HEPATITIS B CAN'T WAIT!



There is a vaccine and effective treatments for hepatitis B. Despite this nearly **1 in 100 people** in Australia are living with chronic hepatitis B<sup>1</sup>.

Over 25% of people living with chronic hepatitis B have not been diagnosed and are unaware of their infection.<sup>2</sup>

## People in Australia CAN'T WAIT to know their hepatitis B status!

Hepatitis B is one of the most common risk factors for liver cancer<sup>3</sup> – the fastest growing cause of cancer deaths in Australia.

We are at a crucial stage in the journey to eliminate viral hepatitis. To prevent people becoming seriously ill with cirrhosis or liver cancer, we urgently need to resource the community response to provide information and support that is inclusive, respectful of and responsive to the needs, culture and preferred language of people affected by hepatitis B.

### GROWING OUR COMMUNITY WORKFORCE WILL SAVE LIVES

The National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023 - 2030 commits to implement, resource, strengthen and sustain a national hepatitis B-specific community workforce.

We CAN'T WAIT to enact this commitment!



### PLANNING FOR A CURE

It is anticipated that a cure for hepatitis B will become available in the coming decade. Researching and developing cures for chronic hepatitis B would save many millions of lives globally and help ensure the elimination of hepatitis B by 2030.

## People living with hepatitis B CAN'T WAIT for a cure!



Three quarters of all people living with chronic hepatitis B are not receiving regular care.<sup>4</sup>



Only 13% of people living with chronic hepatitis B are getting antiviral treatment. This is less than half the proportion (29%) estimated to need treatment.<sup>5</sup>



9%



2,000 fewer people received hepatitis B monitoring during 2020 compared to 2019 - a 9% decrease - and this did not improve in 2021.<sup>6,7</sup>

**452**  
**DEATHS**

In 2021 there were an estimated 452 deaths attributable to hepatitis B, a 6.3% increase since 2017 and well above the National Strategy 2022 target of 30% reduction from 2017.<sup>8</sup>

**PEOPLE WITH HEPATITIS B CAN'T WAIT TO RECEIVE APPROPRIATE INFORMATION AND CARE!**

# HEPATITIS C CAN'T WAIT!

There is now an effective and affordable cure for hepatitis C. Despite this, **more than 115,000 people** were estimated to be living with hepatitis C in Australia at the end of 2020.<sup>9</sup>

More than one in five people living with chronic hepatitis C have not been diagnosed and are unaware of their infection.<sup>10</sup> Of those who are considered 'diagnosed', one-quarter have not received confirmatory testing to know whether their hepatitis C is chronic.<sup>11</sup>



**Community outreach is needed to reach the 20% who are undiagnosed and those who have not had their hepatitis status confirmed.**



Around half of all people living with hepatitis C at the start of 2016 in Australia had initiated antiviral treatment by the end of 2020.<sup>12</sup>



To meet our goal to treat 80% of eligible people with viral hepatitis by 2030 **we need more community outreach** to meet people where they are.



Prisons are now the primary sites of transmission nationally and help sustain the hepatitis C epidemic in Australia. Approximately 80,000 people are incarcerated annually in Australia<sup>13</sup> including more than 15% living with hepatitis C. People in prison are being needlessly infected (and reinfected following cure) because the current responses are not sufficient to prevent transmission.<sup>14</sup>

The National Hepatitis C Strategy 2023 – 2030 commits to implementing needle and syringe programs in corrections settings to prevent hepatitis C transmission.

**We can't wait to enact this commitment!**

**PEOPLE IN PRISON CAN'T WAIT TO HAVE THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS UPHELD!**

**PEOPLE WITH HEPATITIS C CAN'T WAIT TO RECEIVE LIFE SAVING TREATMENT!**

We thank the WHO Collaborating Centre for Viral Hepatitis, The Doherty Institute for their input in developing this resource.

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