

BE FREE FROM HEP C – HEPATITIS C TREATMENTS COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN

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Background: Hepatitis Victoria undertook a community awareness campaign - B FREE FROM HEP C - about the new hepatitis C treatments available on the PBS from March 2016.

The campaign was part of a response co-ordinated by the Victorian Government's to facilitate access to the new treatments.

Methods

Elements included:

- Videos featuring people with lived experience (approaching or undergoing treatment) and a GP
- Street furniture advertising
- Community press advertisements
- Posters for doctor and community health waiting rooms
- Brochures (printed and electronic) for health professionals to give patients (English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic)
- Facebook advertisements
- Community service announcements (TV, radio, print)

All elements directed people to a "befreefromhepc" website landing page, in turn linked to the treatments section of the Hepatitis Victoria website containing current testing, treatment and support information along with personal stories.

Key messages, developed with the affected community, included:

- New easy treatments offer a 95% cure rate
- Treatment is now easier with less side effects
- You could be free from hepatitis C in months

Commencing on 30 May with street furniture and community press advertisements, the campaign was supplemented with widely distributed posters and brochures. Associated communications and media extended the reach of "paid" elements, with other organisations encouraged to make use of the campaign material.

Results: Traffic to the landing page and the website treatments page, and the different components within these, was monitored, as was the campaign social media.

Community advocates were enthusiastic about telling their stories, to which there was a strong community response.

GPs were assisted with relevant professional information as well as information for patients.

Conclusion: A multi-pronged communications approach featuring personal stories is required to reach the many members of the community for whom new hepatitis C treatments might present a cure.

Disclosure of Interest: Hepatitis Victoria recognises the funding from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, the input of advocates, and the support of organisations in distributing campaign material.