

THE VH2022 ACTION PLAN

The elimination of hepatitis B and hepatitis C by 2030 can be Australia's next major preventive and public health success.

To continue the momentum created through the VH2021 Action Plan and lead the collaborative efforts needed to pursue elimination by 2030, the Australian Government can take seven important actions in the next 12 months:

1

Enable the longer-term policy commitment required to achieve 2030 viral hepatitis elimination goals by:

- maintaining two disease-specific and separate National Strategies for hepatitis B and hepatitis C
- including an explicit goal of 2030 elimination in the next iteration of the National Hepatitis B Strategy and National Hepatitis C Strategy
- increasing the length of the next National Hepatitis B Strategy and National Hepatitis C Strategy to 2030, with a mid-point review
- providing a minimum of four years' implementation funding for the five separate National Blood Borne Virus and Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategies (including the National Hepatitis B Strategy, National Hepatitis C Strategy and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander BBV and STI Strategy)
- maintaining the Ministerial Advisory Council on Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections.

2

Ensure all Australians know their hepatitis B status by adopting population-wide hepatitis B testing as a commitment in the National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023-2030 and in national testing policies.

3

Make explicit policy commitments in the National Hepatitis B Strategy 2023-2030 to:

- establish a national hepatitis B-specific community workforce
- implement national hepatitis B public awareness campaigns
- implement research in support of finding a cure for hepatitis B.

4

Make explicit commitments in the National Hepatitis C Strategy 2023 – 2030 to:

- implement the full suite of hepatitis C responses in prisons particularly prison-based needle and syringe / exchange programs
- work with regulators and other key stakeholders to increase the availability of testing technologies including dry blood spot testing, self-testing, and point of care testing.

5

Strengthen the next National Hepatitis B Strategy and National Hepatitis C Strategy by:

- including quality of life/outcome targets with community measurement
- increasing the focus on addressing social and structural determinants of health and the epidemics (e.g. racism, colonialism, legal issues)
- decentralising care and strengthening community led responses
- Including person-centred, whole-of-person and whole-of-life course approaches (e.g. post cure care)
- adding cancer prevention and surveillance
- ensuring coherence and linkages across other national policies (e.g. prevention, cancer, primary care, multicultural health)
- expanding the priority populations to include people who are ineligible for Medicare.

6

Work alongside the community and the sector to build public awareness and support for hepatitis B and hepatitis C care and elimination by engaging with and promoting World Hepatitis Day 2022, including supporting from the new Federal Minister for Health to participate in an Australian World Hepatitis Day address and national event.

7

Ensure Australia's health system has the capacity to prevent, prepare and respond to the harms arising from viral hepatitis by:

- explicitly prioritising liver cancer prevention and responses in Australia's Cancer Plan and related policies
- maintaining Australia's National Hepatitis Infoline to ensure all Australians have access to a single point of contact for timely, confidential and non-stigmatising hepatitis information, community-based support and referral.
- reviewing Australia's long-term health plan (developed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) to ensure sufficient inclusion of communicable disease responses.