# Example press release

*The below press release example is a generic press release about hepatitis C in prisons. This template is designed to be adapted to suit your purposes. Ensure it's tailored with context-specific information, such as local spokespersons, data and case studies where possible, and add a 'hook' or 'why now' if possible. See the 'how to write a press release' document for more tips and advice.*

## Advocates issue urgent call for expanded hepatitis C testing, treatment and prevention in prisons, citing public health threat.

In light of the pressing public health concerns posed by hepatitis C in prisons, advocates are issuing an urgent call for increased efforts to test, treat and prevent this curable disease in prisons worldwide.

Beyond the immediate health risks of hepatitis C infection to people in prison — including liver failure, cancer, and death if left untreated — there are also concerns about the transmission of hepatitis C both within the prisons as well as to the public if infected people are released into the community without treatment.

*"Despite the availability of a treatment with cure rates of over 95% , approximately 242,000 people die from hepatitis C infection every single year, with many behind prison walls,"* explains Professor Andrew Lloyd, chair of the International Network on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users Prisons Network (INHSU Prisons) and Professor at The Kirby Institute, University of New South Wales in Australia. *"There is no other disease that can be so devastating yet so easily treated, and this must change."*

Given that almost one in five people in prison are affected by hepatitis C, prisons represent an important opportunity to identify and treat hepatitis C among people who may have minimal interactions with community-based health care services. Rapid point-of-care testing — similar to tests used to test for COVID-19 — can provide a quick screening option without the need for venepuncture, and treatment options are highly curative.

There are many successful case studies globally, including the SToP-C project in Australia, which tested 3,600 people in prison and offered immediate treatment upon diagnosis. The project demonstrated a 'treatment as prevention' effect, halving in the number of new infections.

*"Despite these proven testing and treatment options, only a fraction of prisons globally offer comprehensive care for hepatitis C,"* adds Professor Lloyd. *"Failure to act not only endangers the health of incarcerated individuals but also poses a significant risk to broader community health upon their release."*

Advocates note that the lack of testing, treatment and prevention programs for hepatitis C in prisons directly violates the United Nations' Nelson Mandela Rules, which state that healthcare within prisons should be equivalent to that of the community.

"*INHSU Prisons and its partners are calling for increased funding for comprehensive testing and treatment programs in prisons*," continued Professor Lloyd. "*This includes policy reforms to ensure equitable access to healthcare services for all people in prison, regardless of hepatitis C status or incarceration duration.*"

INHSU Prisons has also developed global guidelines to articulate best practices in viral hepatitis service delivery in prisons globally. The Guidelines make best practice recommendations for preventive and clinical practice standards in viral hepatitis service delivery in the prison sector based on available evidence and are intended to inform policymaking by national and regional government departments with responsibility for the provision or oversight of prison health services. The Guidelines include 30 recommendations across the domains of: policy, testing, treatment, continuity of care, prevention and harm reduction, education, monitoring and evaluation, and minority populations and special considerations. The guidelines can be accessed HERE.

**ENDS**

## About INHSU Prisons

INHSU Prisons is a Special Interest Group of the The International Network on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users (INHSU), dedicated to advancing the prevention, management, and treatment of hepatitis C among incarcerated individuals. Led by an expert coalition of healthcare professionals, researchers, and advocates, INHSU Prisons seeks to promote evidence-based strategies and policies to address the unique challenges of hepatitis C within prison settings.

**For media inquiries or further information, please contact info@Inhsu.org**

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