

**Wake County Health & Human Services – Hep C**  
**Program: Moving the Community from HCV RNA+ to Cured**

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Wake County Health & Human Services (WCHHS) operates public health clinics that offer health care services for children and adults, ranging from treatment to education. In addition to public clinics, WCHHS also manages HIV and STD outreach testing at jails, treatment centers and other community-based organizations. For the last 18 years, Wake County Health & Human Services has successfully provided HIV/STD community outreach and HIV/AIDS Bridge Counseling services to patients in the community and is a model for the State of North Carolina. In September 2016, WCHHS was selected to join the Gilead: FOCUS Program (Frontlines of Communities in the United States) and subsequently awarded funding to support enhanced community outreach for HIV, HCV, and HBV screening and linkage to care. The FOCUS grant afforded WCHHS the opportunity to introduce a Hepatitis C program to the existing HIV/STD outreach program serving the community. The WCHHS – HIV/STD Community Program, inclusive of the Hep C program, has contributed to creating a healthier community by the work done in Wake County to connect HIV/STD+ individuals to medical care and other services as evidenced by the program being selected as the 2019 recipient of the National Association of Counties Achievement Award.

To bolster effectiveness, modifications to the existing WCHHS - HIV/AIDS linkage to care model were made, which allowed the Hep C program to provide HCV relevant bridge counseling services to HCV mono-infected individuals in community. As the needs of a community are ever changing, the WCHHS – Hep C program adjusted to incorporate a multi-faceted public health approach that prioritizes both macro and micro level interventions equally. With the utilization of the open systemic networking model, WCHHS – Hep C program created a platform for networking across all sectors (public, private, and non-profit) which used bridging capital to encourage systems level collaboration to address the pervasive public health concern of viral Hepatitis C. As a result of the strong external partnerships established by the WCHHS – Hep C program, certain enhanced community-based services have been made available to the population being served. For instance, the program's collaboration with Project Access has made it possible for underprivileged individuals to gain access to a network of specialty providers in the Wake County area, such as a GI Specialist for advanced liver disease related to chronic HCV, at no cost to the patient. Parallel in importance to the macro level work done by the program are the interventions implemented at the micro level directly with the population being served. WCHHS HCV clinical social workers engage the community by utilizing an integrated person-centered care approach to meet the unique needs of each client that is based upon a comprehensive and culturally competent assessment completed. The purpose of the assessment is to identify the social determinants of health creating hardship for clients and subsequently address those barriers through interventions such as: food resources, housing, job opportunities, access to medical care, access to behavioral health care, recovery services, etc.

Purposed to track progress and sustainability, a logic model for the WCHHS – Hep C Program was created to illustrate the relationship between program inputs, measurable outputs, and result-based outcomes. WCHHS accepted an invitation to present the Hep C program logic model at the Gilead sponsored 2020 FOCUS/Carolinas Regional Partners Meeting for the purpose of disseminating best practices to other professionals in the field of public health. Continued dissemination efforts are being made as the WCHHS – Hep C clinical social workers are in the process of obtaining Institutional Review Board approval for articles to be published in professional journals.

Since the introduction of the WCHHS – Hep C program in September 2016 – October 2021:

- **691** HCV RNA+ individuals have been referred to the WCHHS – Hep C program
- **476** HCV RNA+ clients have had a comprehensive social assessment completed
- **388** HCV RNA+ clients have been connected to a medical provider
- **298** HCV RNA+ clients have received HCV Tx & cleared of Hepatitis C