



**“WHAT IS
A FULL LIFE”**

“I WANNA LIVE A FULL LIFE”

Insights on **Hepatitis C Treatment** from
People Who Use Drugs in Hawai‘i



Thaddeus Pham (he/him) • Johns Hopkins University • Bloomberg School of Public Health • Thaddeus.pham@jhu.edu • May 9, 2023

Listen, Learn, Uplift

Purpose of Study



Image Source: Hep Free Hawai'i

Hep C Burden in HI

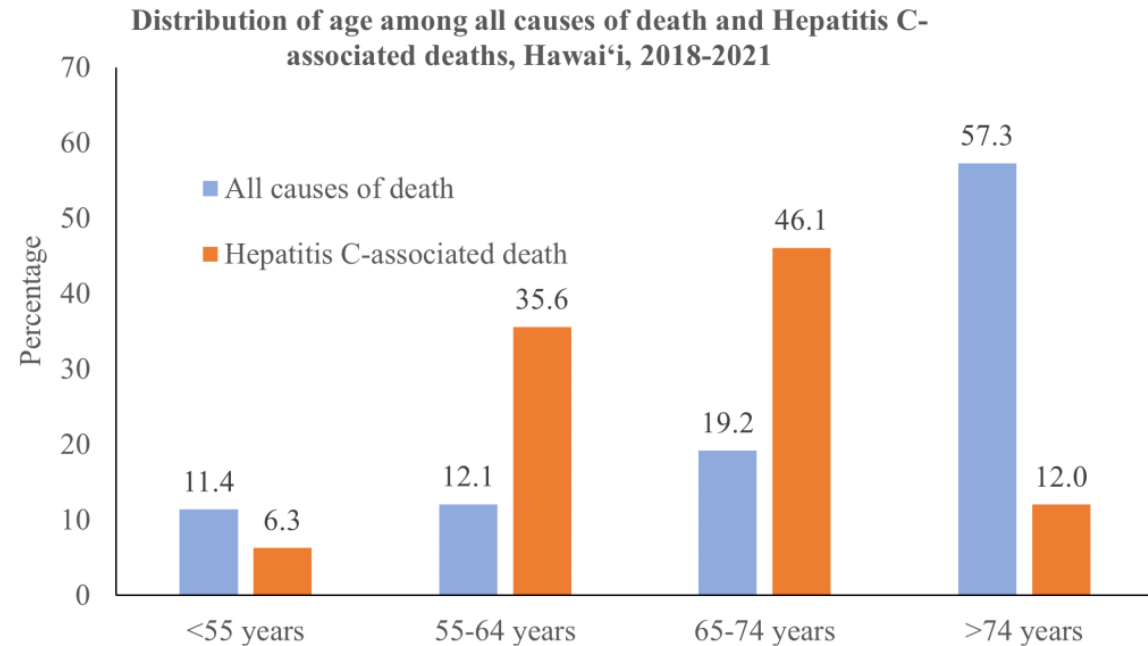


Image Source: Hep Free Hawai'i

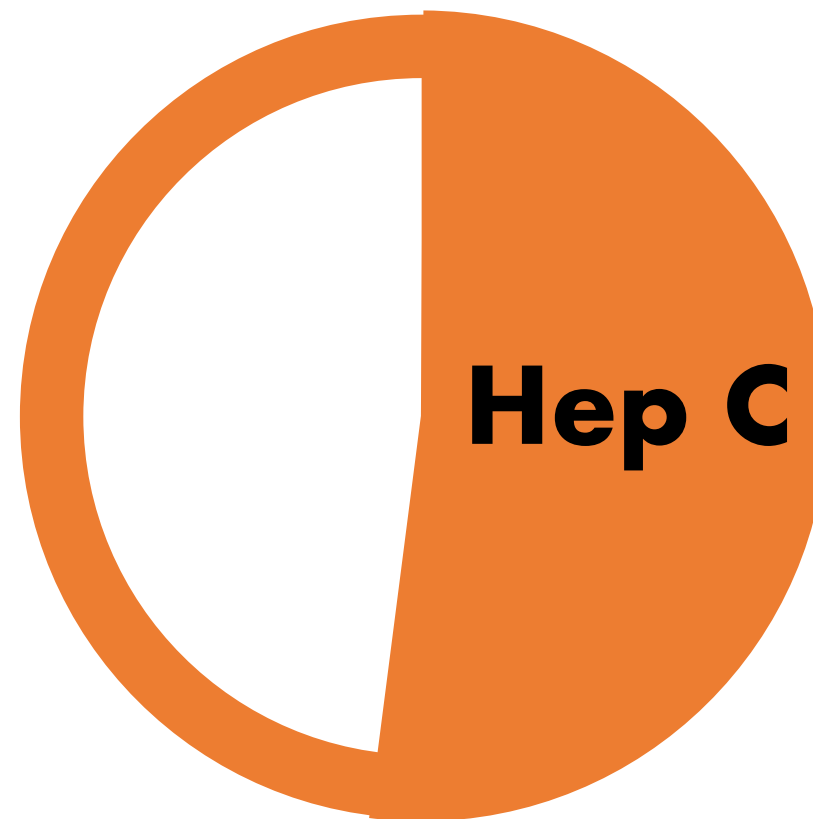


Hawai'i residents with hepatitis C
**died >15 years
earlier**
compared to rest of state (2016-
2017).

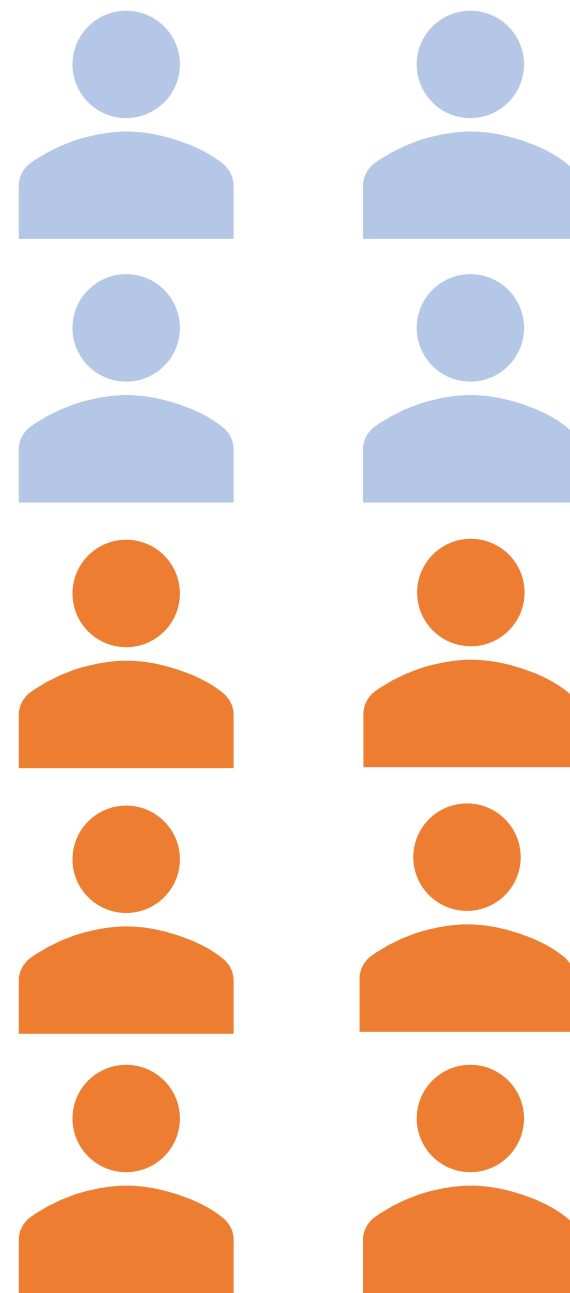
Most (88%) residents with hepatitis C **died earlier** than rest of state

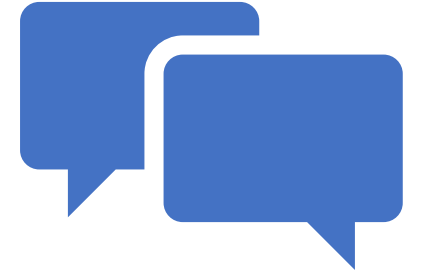


Among syringe service
program clients in Hawai'i,
more than half
were exposed
to hepatitis C.



Among syringe service
program clients in Hawai'i
**6 out of 10 did
not seek care,**
even though they had hep
C.





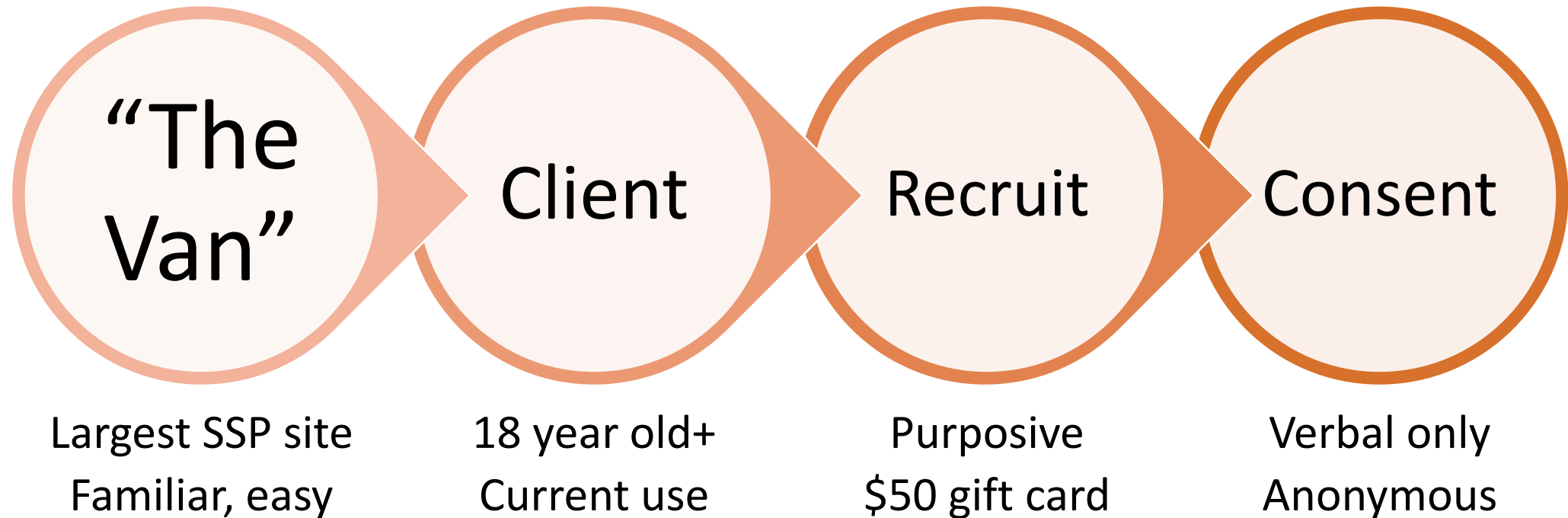
“Talk Story” Interviews

Culturally Congruent Research*

**Internal Review Board (# IRB00023105) approved by Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health on February 8, 2023.*

Study Participants

Research Methodology



Semi-Structured Interviews

Research Methodology

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	May I Record?
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Hep C Disease?
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Hep C Treatment?
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Challenges?
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Opportunities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Other Thoughts?



30 min
max



March
17, 20, 22,
23, 24



Thematic Analysis

Research Methodology

- Reflect on interviews
- Use MS Office tool
- Clean transcriptions
- Summarize case themes
- Sort themes by topic area





Highlights of Themes

Participant Insights

Hep C Disease

Highlights of Themes

“Pretty much everybody I know has it.”

“I know friends that have had it for years and years.”

- PERSONAL CONNECTION

“What is it, eating away your liver somehow?”

- INCONSISTENT KNOWLEDGE

“It is very much contagious, and people are not aware that it's around us all the time.”

- CONCERN ABOUT HEALTH



Hep C Treatment

Highlights of Themes

“There's nothing really good about it, except it can be cured.”

“He’s better now, because he got treatment.”

- PERSONAL CONNECTION

“Interferon is something good to get rid of it.”

- AWARE OF OLD REGIMEN

“I didn't know there was treatment for it. Can you get pill?”

- UNAWARE OF, BUT INTERESTED IN NEW REGIMEN



Treatment Challenges

Highlights of Themes

“Probably just be shame, yeah?”

“Should not bow to stigma they have been brainwashed to believe!”

- PERCEIVED STIGMA

"It's devastating some of the stuff, you know, what we do to ourselves?"

- ONGOING SUBSTANCE USE

"Not everybody got a phone."; "Not everybody on...the internet."; "Painful to bus all the time."

- LOGISTICS OF MAKING APPOINTMENTS



Treatment Opportunities

Highlights of Themes

“Just come to the same spot where the van is.”

“If there was a place people could go like once a week to get their medication. Like if the van gave it out.”

- CO-LOCATED SERVICES AT SYRINGE EXCHANGE

“People come here every day and repeat business is phenomenal.”

- PRINT CAMPAIGN AT THE SYRINGE EXCHANGE

“Listen...Hep C is curable!”; “Things have changed. Read this.”; “Look. It's curable!”

- URGENT, DIRECTIVE, AND SHORT MESSAGING



Other Insights

Highlights of Themes

"I love these guys. They're doing everything they can."

"I really like you guys...providing us with everything, and I appreciate that."

- APPRECIATION FOR SYRINGE EXCHANGE AS SERVICE HUB

"I want to go to sleep somewhere I don't have to worry."

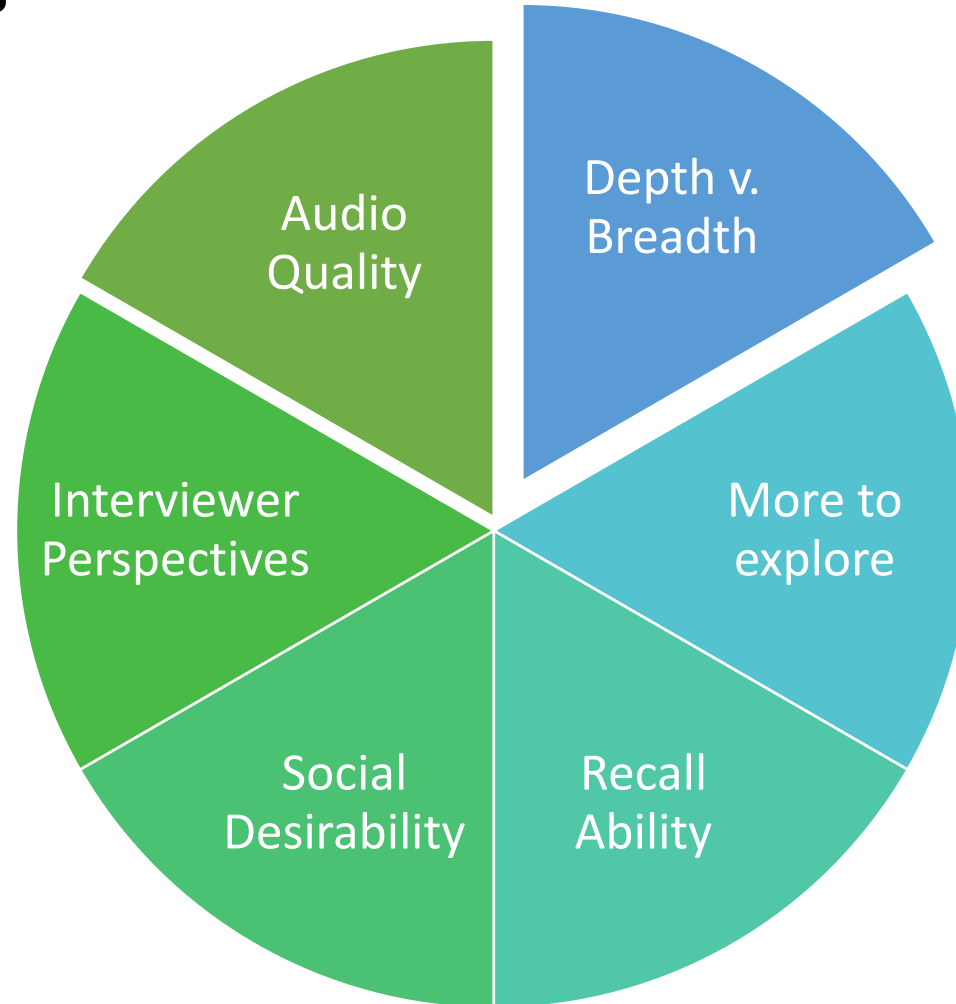
"I don't have water. I don't have money to get, but I need, and I'm thirsty."

- REQUEST TO ADDRESS BASIC NEEDS



Study Limitations

Highlights of Themes



Data for Action

Next Steps



Align

Data for Action

HepFree

30



Align w Data

Data for Action



Align w Strategy

Data for Action



Access by Report

Data for Action

“I Wanna Live a Full Life”

Perceptions of Hepatitis C Treatment Access among People Who Use Drugs in Honolulu, Hawai'i
June 2023

Published by the Hawai'i State Department of Health
in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health

Suggested citation: Pham T, German D. "I wanna live a full life": Perceptions of Hepatitis C Treatment Access among People Who Use Drugs in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Honolulu, HI: Hawai'i State Department of Health; June 2023.



<https://health.hawaii.gov/harmreduction/people-who-use-drugs-talk-about-hep-c/>



Access by Infographic

Data for Action

"I WANNA LIVE A FULL LIFE"
WHAT PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS SAY ABOUT HEP C CURE

In June 2023, the Hawai'i Department of Health released a landmark report that highlighted insights from people who use drugs to guide hepatitis C elimination programs. Such qualitative research aligns with "Equity in Everything", a chief priority of the Hep Free 2030 strategy (www.hepfreehawaii.org/hep-free-2030).

VOICES OF LOCAL PEOPLE
On Meaningful Hepatitis C Treatment

- USE SYRINGE EXCHANGES**
Syringe exchanges are essential hubs for hepatitis C treatment and other related services.
"Just come to the same spot where the van is. There could be a doctor here who could prescribe."
- PROVIDE INFO, REDUCE STIGMA**
People who use drugs are concerned about their health, although stigma and misinformation persist.
"I feel like they think that like people that have it are like, dirty."
- SHORT, DIRECT MESSAGES**
People prefer visual, directive messaging, especially print materials at syringe exchanges.
"Listen...Hep C is curable!"; "Things have changed. Read this."; "Look. It's curable!"

FOR MORE VOICES, SEE THE FULL REPORT
<https://health.hawaii.gov/harmreduction/people-who-use-drugs-talk-about-hep-c>

Updated July 31, 2023

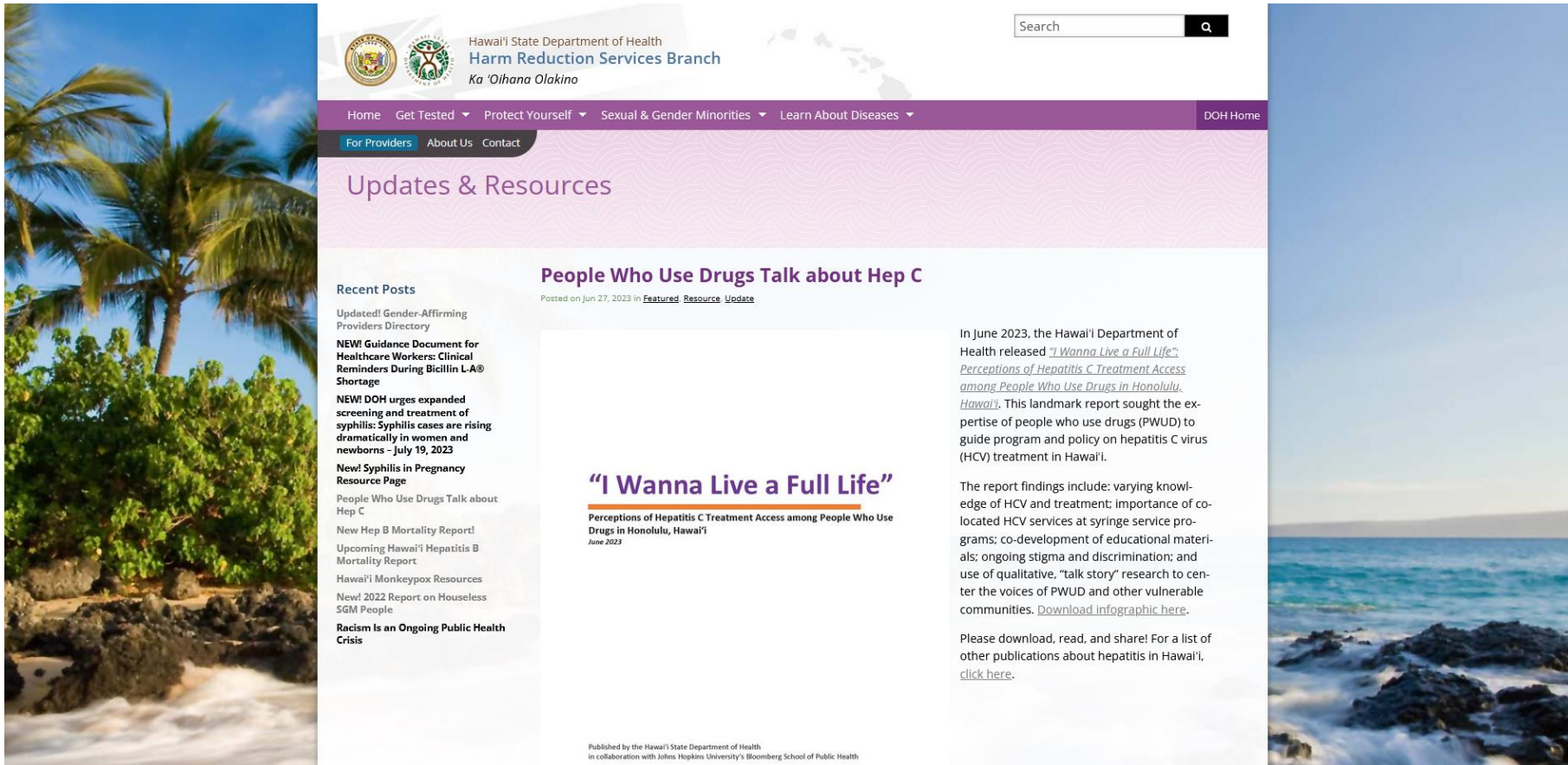


<https://health.hawaii.gov/harmreduction/people-who-use-drugs-talk-about-hep-c/>



Access by Website

Data for Action

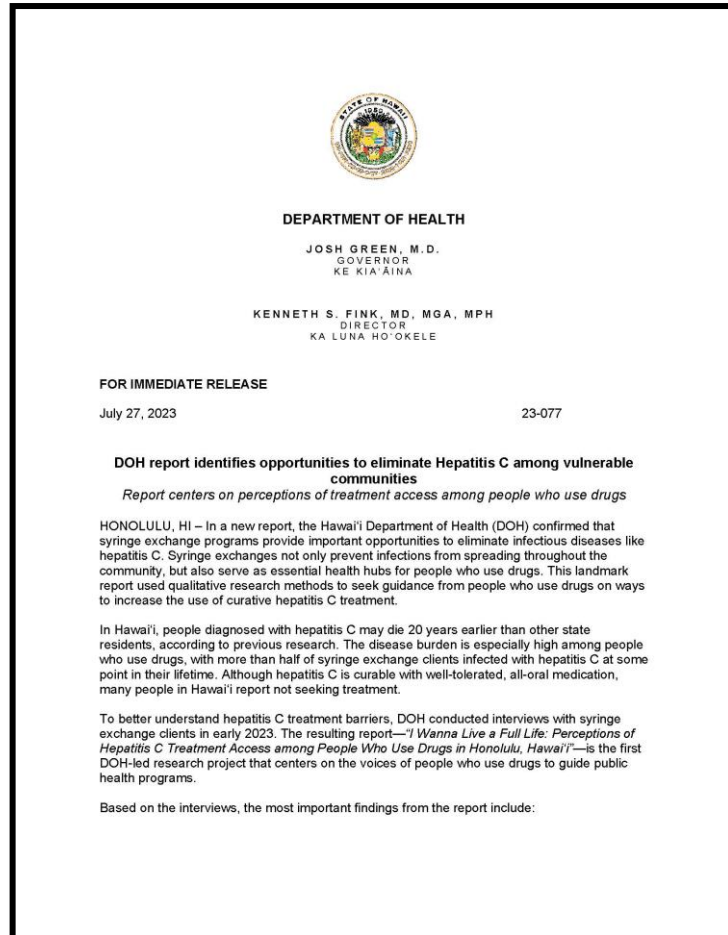


The screenshot shows the website for the Hawaii State Department of Health, Harm Reduction Services Branch. The header includes the department's name and logo, a search bar, and a navigation menu with options like Home, Get Tested, Protect Yourself, Sexual & Gender Minorities, Learn About Diseases, and DOH Home. Below the navigation is a section for 'Updates & Resources'. The main content area features a 'Recent Posts' sidebar on the left and a featured article on the right. The featured article is titled 'I Wanna Live a Full Life' and discusses the release of a report on Hepatitis C treatment access among people who use drugs in Honolulu, Hawaii. The article text includes: 'In June 2023, the Hawai'i Department of Health released "I Wanna Live a Full Life": Perceptions of Hepatitis C Treatment Access among People Who Use Drugs in Honolulu, Hawai'i. This landmark report sought the expertise of people who use drugs (PWUD) to guide program and policy on hepatitis C virus (HCV) treatment in Hawai'i. The report findings include: varying knowledge of HCV and treatment; importance of co-located HCV services at syringe service programs; co-development of educational materials; ongoing stigma and discrimination; and use of qualitative, "talk story" research to center the voices of PWUD and other vulnerable communities. Download infographic here. Please download, read, and share! For a list of other publications about hepatitis in Hawai'i, click here.'



Amplify thru DOH

Data for Action




<https://health.hawaii.gov/news/newsroom/doh-report-identifies-opportunities-to-eliminate-hepatitis-c-among-vulnerable-communities/>



Amplify thru Media³

Data for Action



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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KA LUNA HO'OKELE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 27, 2023 23-077

DOH report identifies opportunities to eliminate Hepatitis C among vulnerable communities
Report centers on perceptions of treatment access among people who use drugs

HONOLULU, HI – In a new report, the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) confirmed that syringe exchange programs provide important opportunities to eliminate infectious diseases like hepatitis C. Syringe exchanges not only prevent infections from spreading throughout the community, but also serve as essential health hubs for people who use drugs. This landmark report used qualitative research methods to seek guidance from people who use drugs on ways to increase the use of curative hepatitis C treatment.

In Hawai'i, people diagnosed with hepatitis C may die 20 years earlier than other state residents, according to previous research. The disease burden is especially high among people who use drugs, with more than half of syringe exchange clients infected with hepatitis C at some point in their lifetime. Although hepatitis C is curable with well-tolerated, all-oral medication, many people in Hawai'i report not seeking treatment.

To better understand hepatitis C treatment barriers, DOH conducted interviews with syringe exchange clients in early 2023. The resulting report—*“I Wanna Live a Full Life: Perceptions of Hepatitis C Treatment Access among People Who Use Drugs in Honolulu, Hawai'i”*—is the first DOH-led research project that centers on the voices of people who use drugs to guide public health programs.

Based on the interviews, the most important findings from the report include:



MAUI NOW Sections Maui News Wildfires & Recovery Business Weather

Maui News

Syringe exchange programs help prevent disease, Hepatitis C in vulnerable communities

July 29, 2023 · 8:37 AM HST
* Updated July 29, 2023 · 8:38 AM

13 COMMENTS


Listen to this Article
2 minutes



Although hepatitis C is curable with well-tolerated, all-oral medication, many people in Hawai'i report not seeking treatment. (Pexels)

Amplify thru Socials⁴

Data for Action



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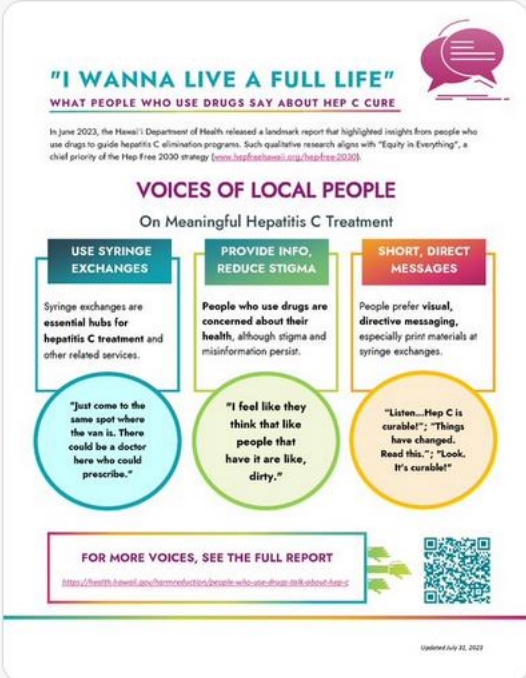
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Hep Free Hawaii @HepFreeHawaii · Jul 31

"I Wanna Live a Full Life": Read the new #hepC report from the @hawaiiDOH, which highlights the voices of people who use drugs. Our voices matter! #HepFree2030 #takeTHAThepatitis

hepfreehawaii.org/news/hep-c-voi...



"I WANNA LIVE A FULL LIFE"
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FOR MORE VOICES, SEE THE FULL REPORT
<https://health.hawaii.gov/immereport/voices-who-use-drugs-to-lead-change/>

Created July 31, 2023

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Amplify thru SEP

Data for Action



HEP C CURE

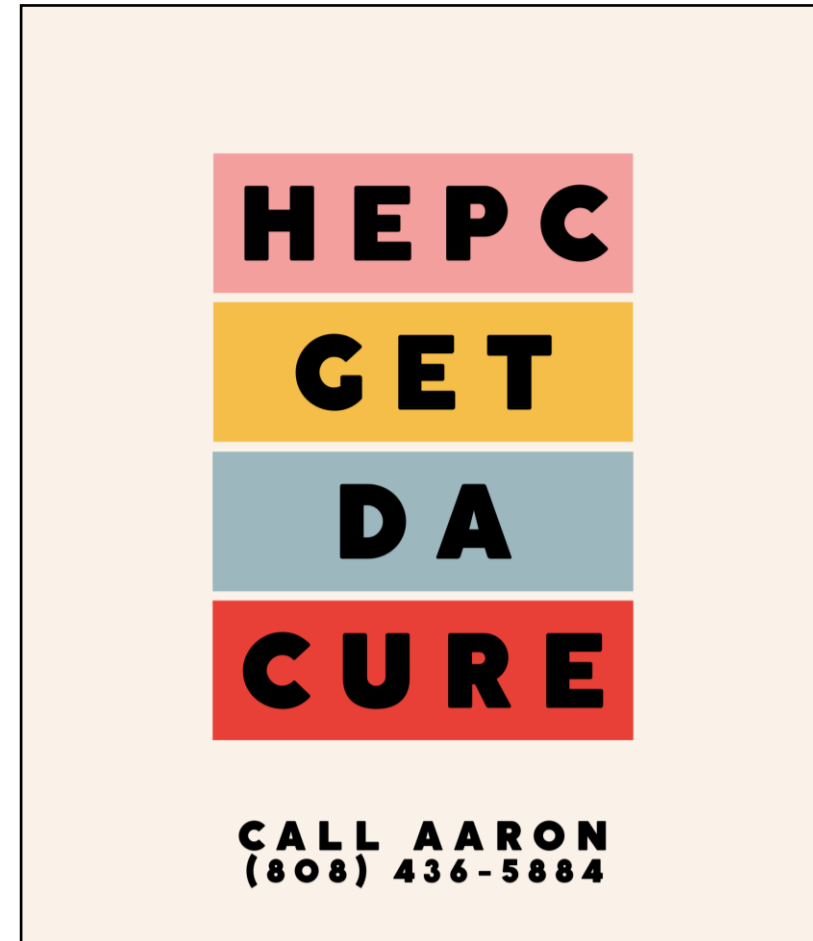


GET IT!

**CALL AARON
(808) 436-5884**

HEP C CURE

The poster features a blue background with a white torn-paper effect at the top and bottom. A black megaphone icon is on the left. The text 'HEP C CURE' is at the top and bottom in orange. 'GET IT!' is in yellow in the center. 'CALL AARON (808) 436-5884' is in white at the bottom left.



HEP C

GET

DA

CURE

**CALL AARON
(808) 436-5884**

The poster has a light beige background. The text 'HEP C', 'GET', 'DA', and 'CURE' is arranged vertically in black, each within a colored rectangular box: pink for 'HEP C', yellow for 'GET', light blue for 'DA', and red for 'CURE'. 'CALL AARON (808) 436-5884' is in black at the bottom.



VOICES TO ACTION



**“I WANNA LIVE
A FULL LIFE”**

Mahalo Dr. Danielle German, syringe exchange workers, study participants, and **all people who use drugs in Hawai‘i**