19 October 2015: Sharing the load

October 19, 2015 By David Pieper

In my last blog entry I referred briefly to the good people fighting along-side us in clinics, in government and in the community sector. To you ladies and gentlemen I want to say a big THANK YOU. Thank you to everyone working in hepatitis C for their dedication, their care, their understanding and their hard work.

While my interest in hepatitis C might be personal, it does not diminish in any way the commitment of professionals working toward improving the health and well being of affected people and communities. In fact it wouldn't happen without you.

My treatment experience is giving me a great appreciation of the power of modern medicine. And writing this blog gives me a sense that my experience can have a positive impact on the lives of other people with hepatitis C. Meanwhile, clinicians across the world are conducting trials to prove the effectiveness of new drugs in different circumstances; nurses are managing us through treatment day-to-day; social researchers are providing insights into transmission and prevention that will change the way the community responds to hepatitis C; and community organisations are delivering education, advice, support services, and programs to enable community advocacy.

And then there are the bureaucrats. Policy makers have the potential to have an enormous impact on the lives of people with hepatitis C: by enabling access to treatment; by signing off on strategies and targets for treatment and prevention; and providing funding for these essential programs.

As patients, people with lived experience of hepatitis C, and representatives of affected communities, we have a vital role to play in this too. A phrase that has often been used in relation to people living with HIV is "nothing about us without us" and the same applies to hepatitis C. We need to be part of the debate and part of the solution. We need to be involved in all aspects of the response to hepatitis C. But we need to respect the professionals in the field and champion their work.

We are on the cusp of a revolution, but there are plenty of people to share the load.

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