Disturbing News about Australia's Hepatitis C Treatment Program

February 7, 2016 By Greg Jefferys

Disturbing News
Today I heard a couple of pieces of disturbing news concerning access to Hepatitis C treatment on Australia's PBS. One came in the email below:

Hi Greg
Sorry I didn't know of any other way to contact you. But I went to Lismore liver clinic in New South Wales today. I have Hep C genotype 1a. F1 borderline 2. 8.4 hundred thousand viral load.
I was told I'm not sick enough to get on PBS until at least 2017. So I live in northern NSW, at ###### 2.5 hours south drive from Gold Coast n 1.5 hour drive north of Coffs Harbour. I was told to contact you as even my own doctor won't prescribe this medicine. If you know of any treating doctors who will prescribe me on March 1 or around then on the PBS can you please let me know. I'm able to get to Gold Coast or down Coffs Harbour way.
Thank you so much
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Sadly this email seems to confirm my initial fears that access to Hep C treatment with the news DAAs such as Harvoni, Sovaldi and Daclatasvir will be triaged.
Of course it will be because there is no way that Australia's public health service could ever cope with more than 100,000 patients wanting treatment for their Hepatitis C.
So it is the old story we have heard again and again. People with Hep C being told that they are not sick enough to get treatment.
The person who wrote the above email in borderline F2 .... so she it told to wait until 2017 when it is likely that she will be F4, have scars on her liver, have cirrhosis, have a greatly increased change of getting liver cancer.
So she has to wait 2 more years knowing that the Hep C virus is slowly chewing holes in her liver and destroying her life.
It is very disappointing but this is the same story in the UK where people were told that access to Hepatitis C treatment there would not be traiged but it is. And it is the same in the USA where people wanting treatment for Hep C through their health insurance are routinely told that " they are not sick enough."

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