Hepatitis C: When it gets personal

May 22, 2016 By Grace Campbell

It’s been a funny old time.

I had a message from one of the people who followed my lead and headed to St Vincents to access treatment for their hepatitis C. He’s received the all clear - SVR12 and all is looking good for him.

My good friend Steve knocked his hep C on the head over a year ago and now this year has a new liver thanks to a family’s selfless act at the saddest time of their life.

The journalist who conducted my initial interview with ABC Radio told me they often run into people who ask how I am going and they had received a lovely letter from one of the listeners saying what an interesting interview it had been and how she often thinks of it.

And finally - a friend here in town rang me to thank me for the work I’d done to get direct acting antivirals (DAAs) approved in Australia. He appreciated it because he has hepatitis C and has just managed to access Harvoni. He’s finished his first three weeks and goes in for his four week blood tests next week. The interesting thing about this is that I had no idea he had HCV.

I’m so pleased that the efforts of organisations such as Hepatitis Australia and Hepatitis NSW have paid off for so many people. I’m thrilled for my friend. With minimal fibrosis and a low viral load he should be happy and healthy in no time. I’m equally thrilled for Steve who now has a second shot at life.

The times they are a changing for hepatitis C. We are entering into a period of significant change with treatment options. More people have the capacity to be cured. Treatments are more easily tolerated. Let’s hope that treatment is not just successful but affordable.

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