Hepatitis C: The treatment trains keep rolling ...

March 12, 2016 By Grace Campbell

Often you'll see treatment compared to a train journey on the Hep Forums. People talk about boarding the train, riding the train, setting off on their treatment journey.

I've seen a few trains take off from the station and travel though Heplandia (thanks for naming our country, Slats). People join these trains at various places: highways, byways and little-known sidings. As the train continues along its track, more and more people join.

Sometimes the journeys are informative. Advice is sought and given, suggestions are made, side effects are discussed.

Sometimes the journeys are quiet and reflective. People revisit past treatments, previous failures, friends who have been lost along the way. Sometimes they grieve for their own lost health.

Sometimes they are riotous and happy, with impromptu conga lines breaking out along the corridors. This is generally when people announce great blood tests or scan results, but the loudest cheers are reserved for the first "undetected" reading and the final SVR12 - the cure.

Like I said, I've watched a few trains pull out from the station now. I was on one of them myself. The train I was on had wonderful passengers who genuinely cared about their fellow travellers. They acted like a cheer squad, a confessor and a therapist all rolled into one. I know my treatment would have been less interesting, less supported and less fun without my fellow travellers.

I get the same delight now, watching the same amazing support offered to people on the Hep forum as I received myself. Fellow travellers, currently undertaking treatment, make sure no one feels alone. The old hands, those who have gone before, walk the corridors so they can share their experiences if needed. A lot of our passengers are incredibly knowledgeable about the virus and treatment. They stay abreast of developments in the field and are always willing to share reading material in the form of studies, articles and information.

One of the great things about forums like this is that even when people have finished their journey, a number of them hang around riding the rails, to make sure there is a solid and stable user base and that we don't lose that knowledge that has been accumulated over so many weeks

months and years.

So here’s to all of us. The passengers, the conductors, the guards, the engineers, the drivers ...

Here’s to our journey.

I’m glad I’ve had the opportunity to make it with you.

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