

HEPATITIS C ELIMINATION  
ROADMAP ONTARIO

# The Roadmap to Eliminating Hepatitis C in Ontario

May 10, 2023

# Our Panelists

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- **Jordan Feld**, Hepatologist, University Health Network
- **Jason Altenberg**, CEO, South Riverdale Community Health Centre,
- **Joanne Lush**, Manager, AIDS and Hepatitis C Programs, Ontario Ministry of Health
- **Vanessa Tran**, Clinical Microbiologist, Public Health Ontario
- **Mandy Mack**, Traditional Healing and Wellness Manager, Indigenous Primary Health Care Council
- **Jennifer Broad**, Program Manager, Harm Reduction & Hepatitis C, South Riverdale Community Health Centre

# Today's agenda

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- 1. Overview of the *Ontario Hepatitis C Elimination Roadmap***  
*Jason Altenberg and Jordan Feld, Roadmap Co-Chairs*
- 2. HCV reflex testing and public health context**  
*Vanessa Tran, Public Health Ontario*
- 3. Provincial advancements in HCV policies and programs**  
*Joanne Lush, Ministry of Health*
- 4. Community health perspectives for HCV elimination**  
*Jennifer Broad, Toronto Community Hep C Program*  
*Mandy Mack, Indigenous Primary Health Care Council*
- 5. Panel discussion and Q&A**

# HEP CAN'T WAIT.

Hepatitis C disproportionately impacts **marginalized communities** in Canada.

Policies that take a health equity approach are needed. **Now.**

**CANADIAN** VIRAL HEPATITIS ELIMINATION DAY 



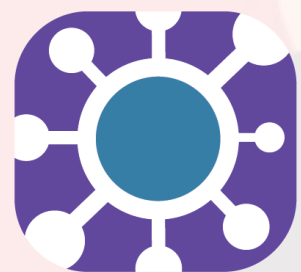
CanHepC  
Canadian Network on Hepatitis C  
Réseau Canadien sur l'Hépatite C

Canadian Association  
for the Study of the Liver



liver.ca  
Canadian Liver Foundation  
Fondation canadienne du foie





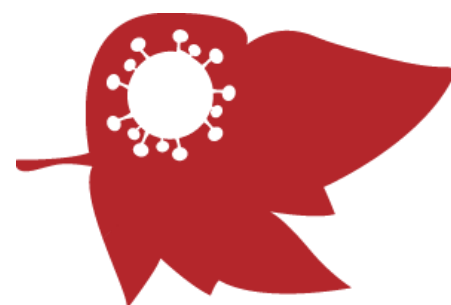
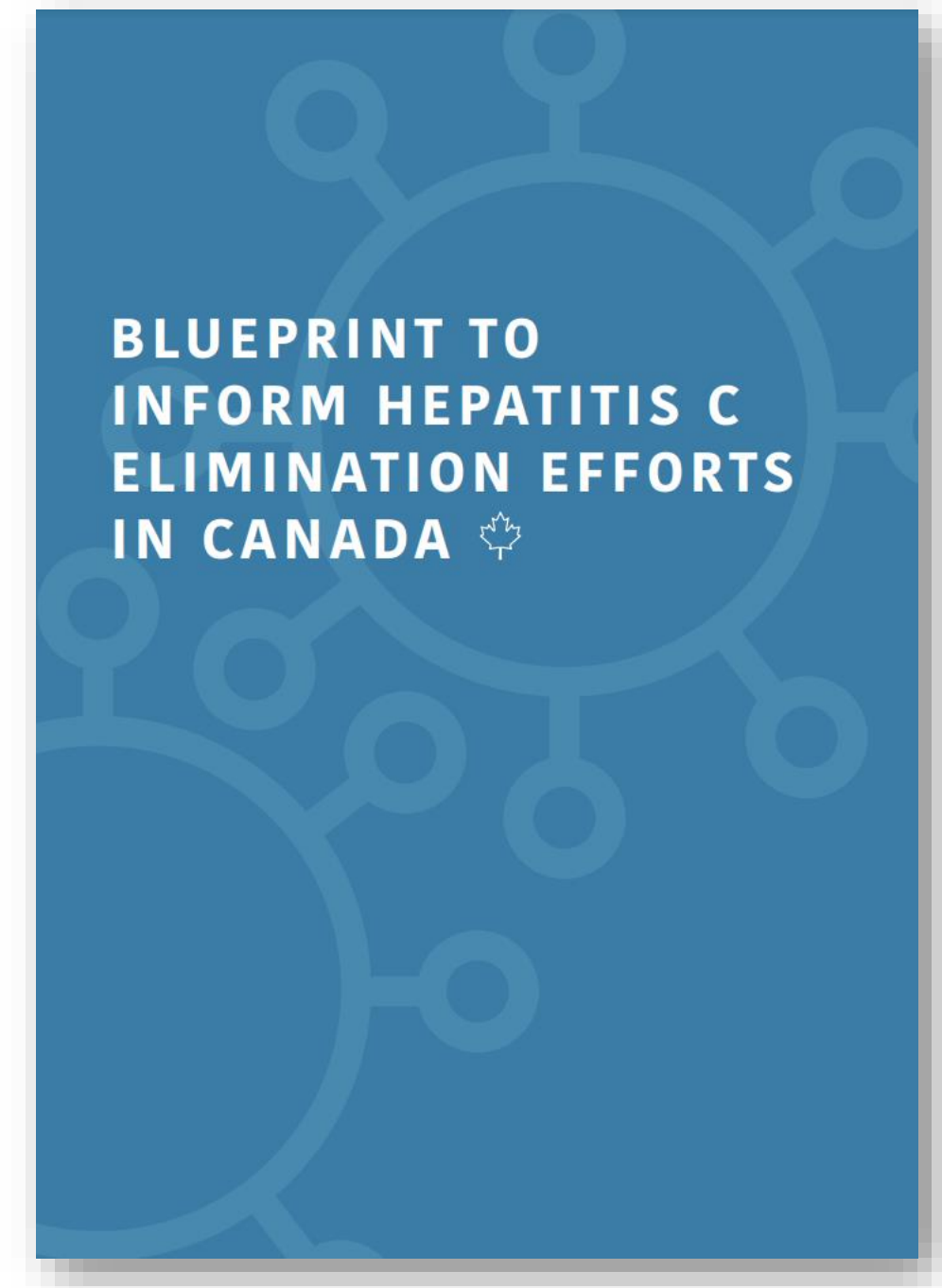
HEPATITIS C ELIMINATION  
ROADMAP ONTARIO

# ***Ontario Hepatitis C Elimination Roadmap: Overview and key information***

# National Blueprint for HCV Elimination

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- Evidence-based policy tool with recommendations on prevention, testing and treatment.
- Pan-Canadian, multi-stakeholder engagement process
- Developed a national framework, population-specific recommendations and agreed upon targets to measure progress.



**CanHepC**

Canadian Network on Hepatitis C  
Réseau Canadien sur l'Hépatite C



# Regional HCV Elimination Planning

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## Objectives:

- Contextualize the Blueprint to regions
- Regional stakeholder consensus on what to prioritize.
- Address specific regional barriers or enablers.
- Measure progress towards elimination.

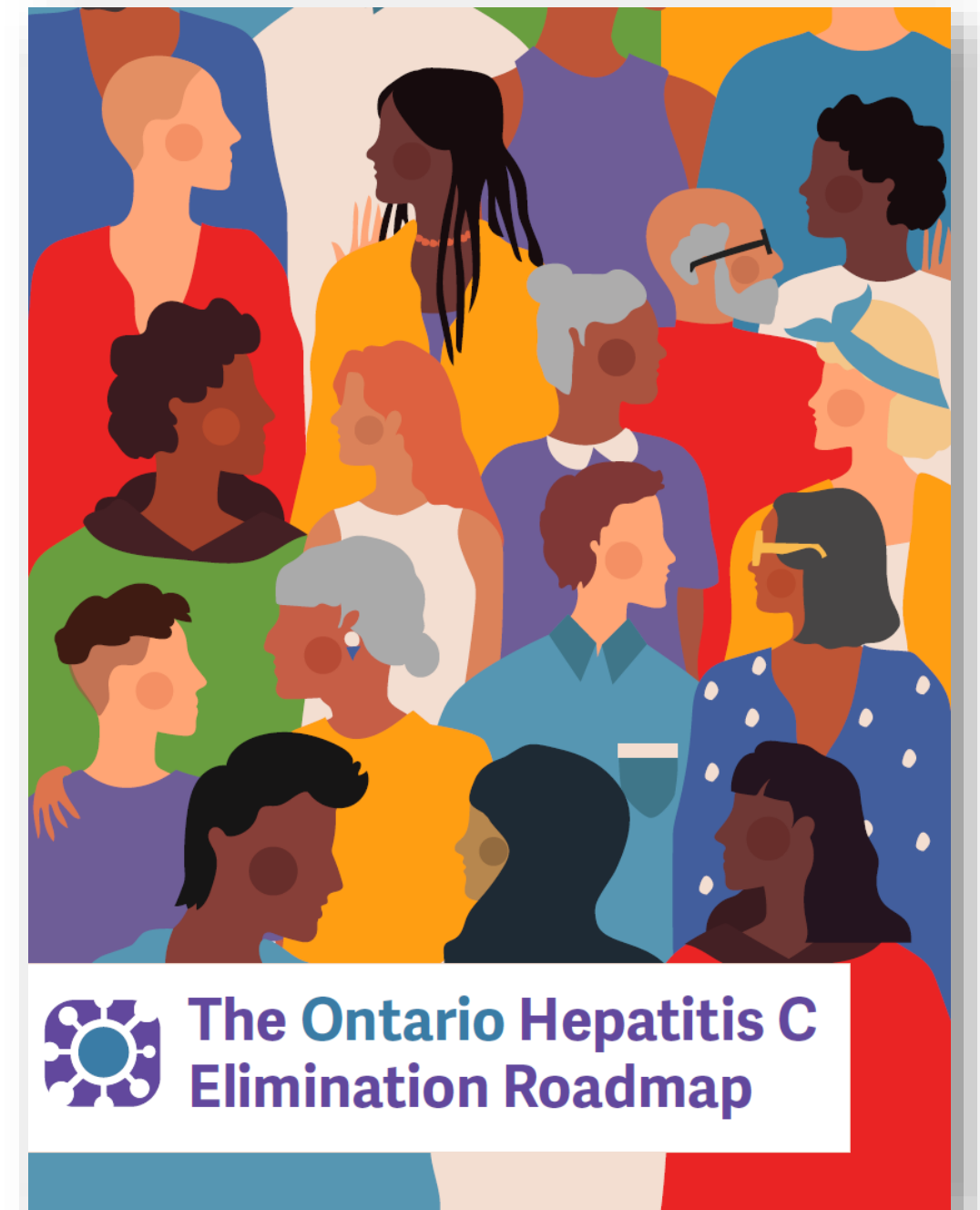
## Regions:

- British Columbia
- Prairies
- Ontario
- Quebec
- Atlantic
- National Indigenous



# Ontario Hepatitis C Elimination Roadmap

- The *Roadmap* is **guiding policy and practice** to end hepatitis C as a public health threat by 2030.
- A **collaborative, multi-sector initiative** with government, clinicians, community and more.
- Includes **recommendations that address prevention, testing and treatment**, including among five priority populations.

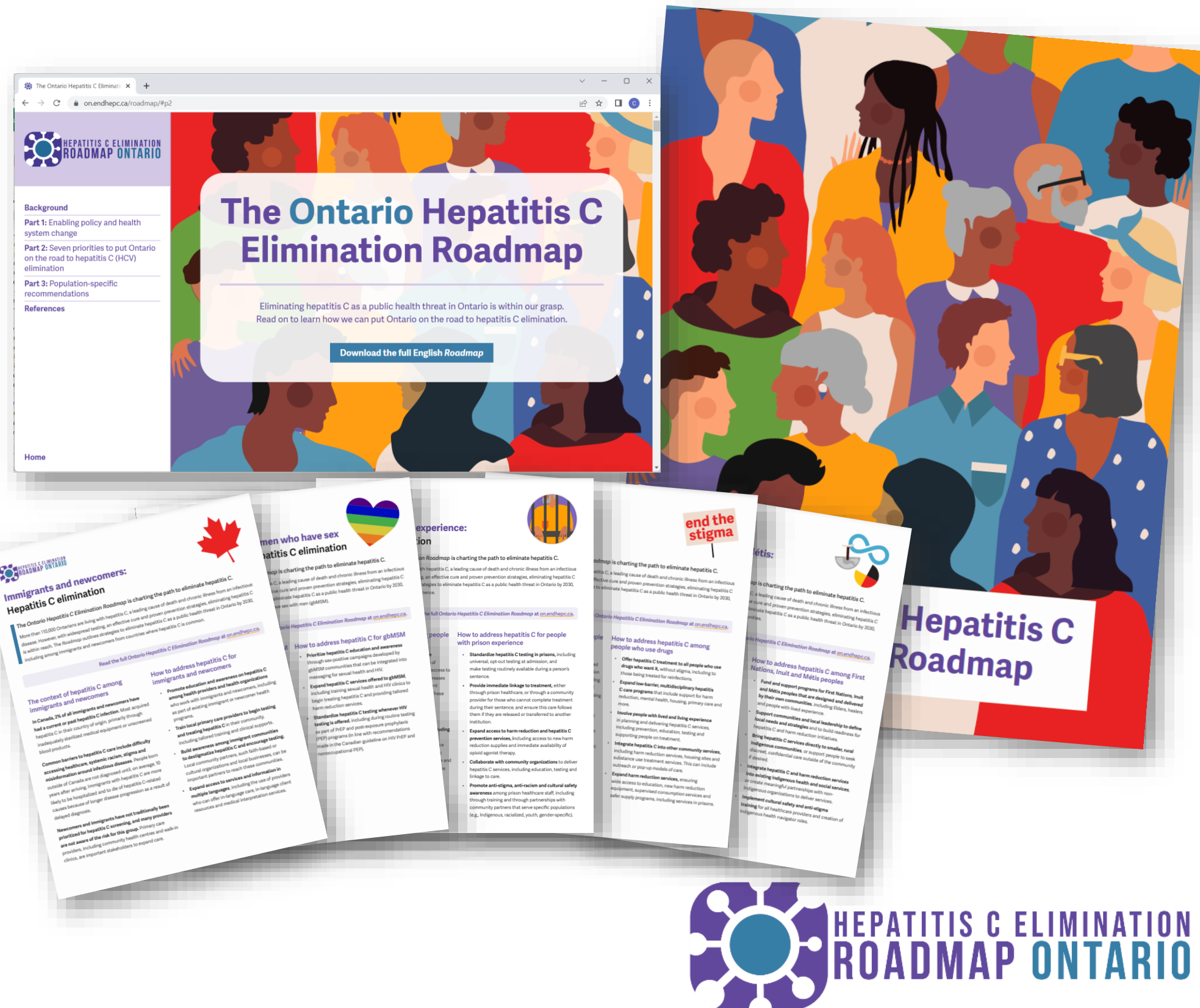




# The Roadmap has launched!

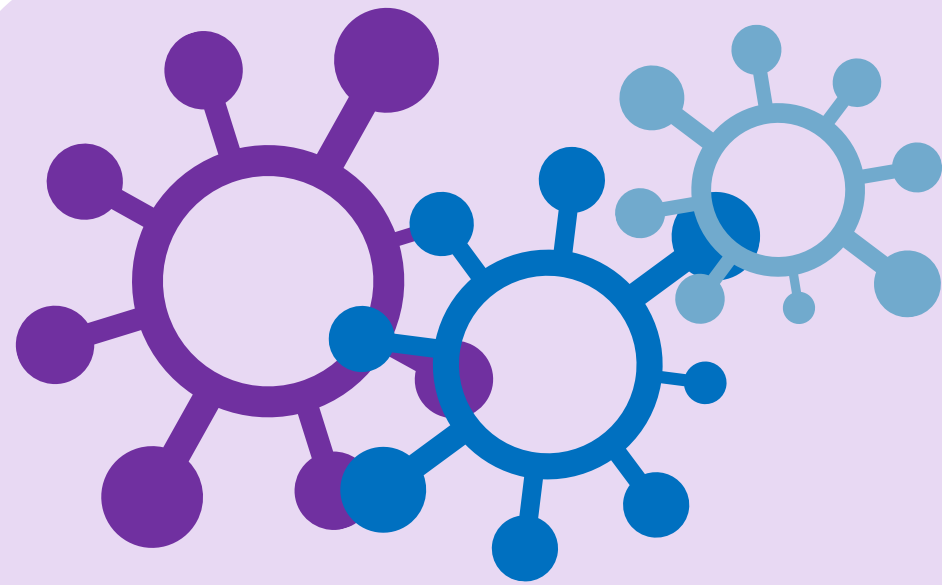
- Full PDF report
- Simplified web report
- Fact sheets

Visit [on.endhepc.ca](https://on.endhepc.ca) to learn more



# Hepatitis C in Ontario

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**Over 110,000 Ontarians are living with hepatitis C.**

Hepatitis C is a leading cause of death and illness from an infectious disease.



**It's estimated that 1 in 3 Ontarians are unaware of their infection.**

Testing is the only way to know if you have hepatitis C.



**Modern treatments cure over 95% of people.**

If left untreated, hepatitis C can cause serious liver disease and liver cancer.

# Hepatitis C Priority Populations

Certain communities experience a disproportionate burden of HCV due to marginalization that increase their risk and create barriers to care.



People who use drugs



People with prison experience



First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples



Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men



Immigrants and newcomers

# 2030 Hepatitis C Elimination targets

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With widespread testing, an effective cure and proven prevention strategies, Ontario can eliminate HCV as a public health threat. The World Health Organization and Canada aim to:



Reduce new  
Infections by **80%**



Diagnose **90%** of  
people living with  
hepatitis C



Begin treatment for  
**80%** of people living  
with hepatitis C

# Roadmap Development Process



# Advisory committee and working groups

## HCV Care Providers

- Toronto Centre for Liver Disease (University Health Network)
- South Riverdale Community Health Centre
- Niagara Health Hepatitis C Care Clinic
- Toronto Community Hepatitis C Program
- Elevate NWO
- Sanguen Health Centre

## Community Networks/Organizations

- CATIE
- Action Hepatitis Canada
- Ontario Hepatitis C Teams Network
- CanHepC

## Priority Populations

- Oahas
- PASAN
- Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance
- Crossroads Refugee Health Clinic (Women's College Hospital)
- Canadian Association of People Who Use Drugs

- Ontario Network of People Who Use Drugs

## Provider Associations

- Alliance for Healthier Communities
- Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario
- Canadian Association of Hepatology Nurses
- Nurse Practitioner Association of Ontario

## Indigenous Partners

- Indigenous Primary Health Care Council
- Métis Nation of Ontario
- Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
- Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre
- Ska:Na Family Learning Centre
- National Indigenous HCV Elimination Process

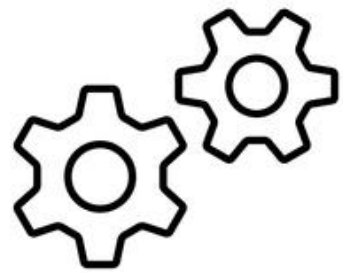
## Government/provincial agencies

- Ontario Ministry of Health (ex-officio)
- Public Health Ontario (ex-officio)
- Public Health Agency of Canada (ex-officio)

Consulted with  
over **130**  
**stakeholders**  
over dozens of  
sessions

# Roadmap Report Structure

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**Part 1:**  
**Enabling policy and health system change**



**Part 2:**  
**Seven priorities for Ontario to reach elimination**



**Part 3:**  
**Population-specific recommendations**

# Part 1: Enabling policy and health system change

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- **Elevating HCV as a provincial priority**  
Buy-in, leadership and action from government and provincial agencies.
- **Ontario elimination steering committee**  
Oversight for implementation of recommendations and to advance and monitor HCV elimination progress.
- **Improving capacity for data and monitoring**  
Connecting data sources on key elimination indicators, and sharing this through a centralized dashboard to track our progress.



# Part 2: Seven priorities to eliminate HCV

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- 1 Use new testing approaches to eliminate delays in HCV diagnosis
- 2 Expand HCV testing beyond risk-based screening
- 3 Streamline HCV testing and treatment for new care settings
- 4 Bolster harm reduction services to reduce new HCV cases
- 5 Increase the role of primary care in HCV elimination
- 6 Provide universal HCV testing and linkage to care in prisons
- 7 Raise awareness and link people and providers to HCV information

# Part 3: Population-specific recommendations

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- Elimination can only be reached through a priority populations approach.
- Communities have unique needs, however many people have intersecting identities that impact their experience and risk for HCV.
- Specific recommendations for each group cover:
  - Tailoring services to provide relevant, culturally safe care
  - Policies and strategies to address and remove barriers to HCV care
  - Community-driven prevention and awareness



People who use drugs



People with prison experience



First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples



gbMSM



Immigrants and newcomers

# Key highlights from The Roadmap



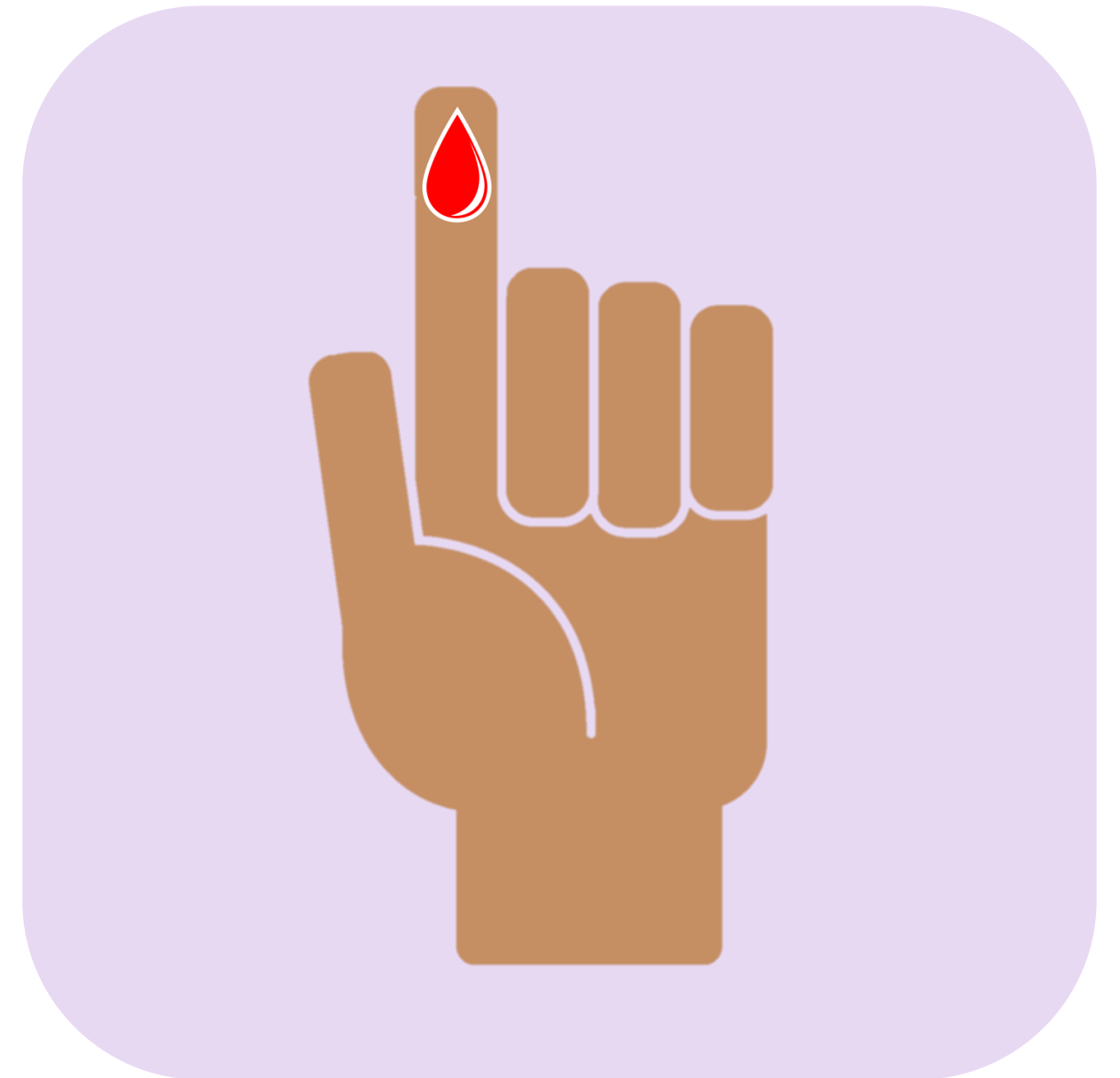
# New testing approaches

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1 in 3 people living with HCV are unaware of their status, and may have barriers to routine testing.

## Summary of recommendations:

- Implementation of routine reflex RNA testing in provincial laboratories
- Fund and implement point-of-care (POC) and dried blood spot testing (DBS).
- POC and DBS training and tools for providers in high-prevalence settings or where blood draws are a barrier.



# Expanding HCV in primary care

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Specialists still provide over 90% of care for people with HCV in Ontario.

Modern hepatitis C treatments can be delivered by primary care providers.

## **Summary of recommendations:**

- Expanding HCV training programs can support more providers to deliver care in Ontario.



# Standardized care in provincial prisons

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People who've been in prison are **40 times** more likely to have ever had hepatitis C.

## Summary of recommendations:

- Provide routine access to HCV testing upon admission and throughout one's sentence.
- Standardize immediate treatment starts or linkage to a community provider who can provide care upon release.



# Integrating HCV with other services

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Simplified HCV testing and treatment can be delivered in many community or non-clinical settings.

Integrating HCV care with existing services can remove barriers for many populations.

## **Examples include integration with:**

- Harm reduction programs
- OAT or substance use medicine
- Community pharmacies
- Sexual health services



# First Nations, Inuit and Métis HCV Care

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HCV elimination strategies must be done through a reconciliatory lens.

## Summary of recommendations:

- Support and funding for Indigenous-led organizations to deliver HCV services.
- Community-driven approaches that involve input from Elders, healers, community leadership and community members.
- Ensuring competence in trauma-informed, culturally safe care from non-Indigenous providers.





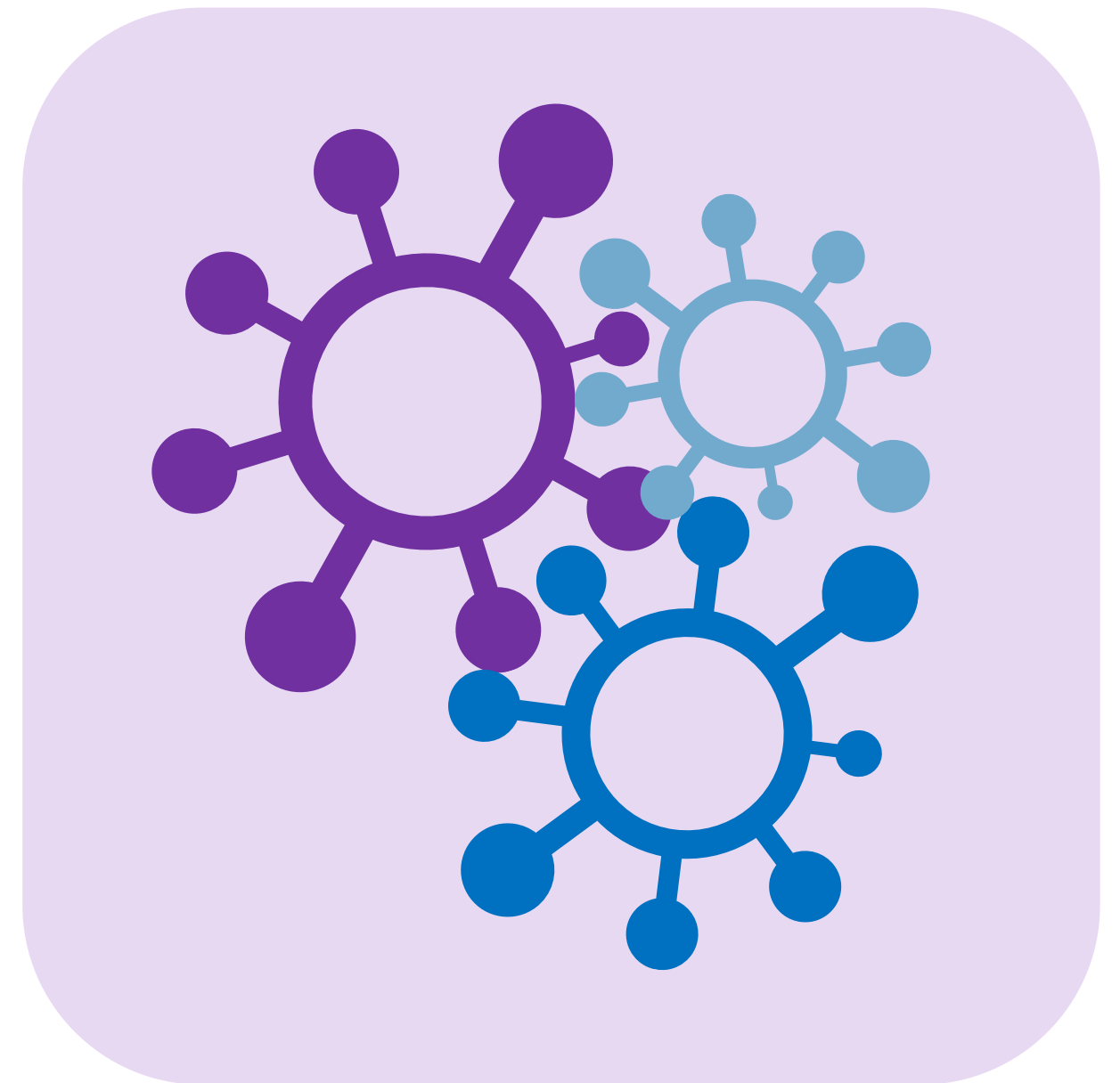
# Single source for HCV information

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Awareness by both the public and health providers is crucial to reach elimination.

## **A web portal with:**

- Information for the public, including ability to find services and make self-referrals.
- Repository of HCV provider resources including trainings, clinical tools and program development resources.
- Data dashboard to monitor HCV elimination progress.



# Next steps

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- Continue building awareness and support from elimination stakeholders.
- Take action to implement recommendations – 2030 is approaching!
  - Ontario HCV Elimination Steering Committee
- Pan-Canadian coordination and information sharing.



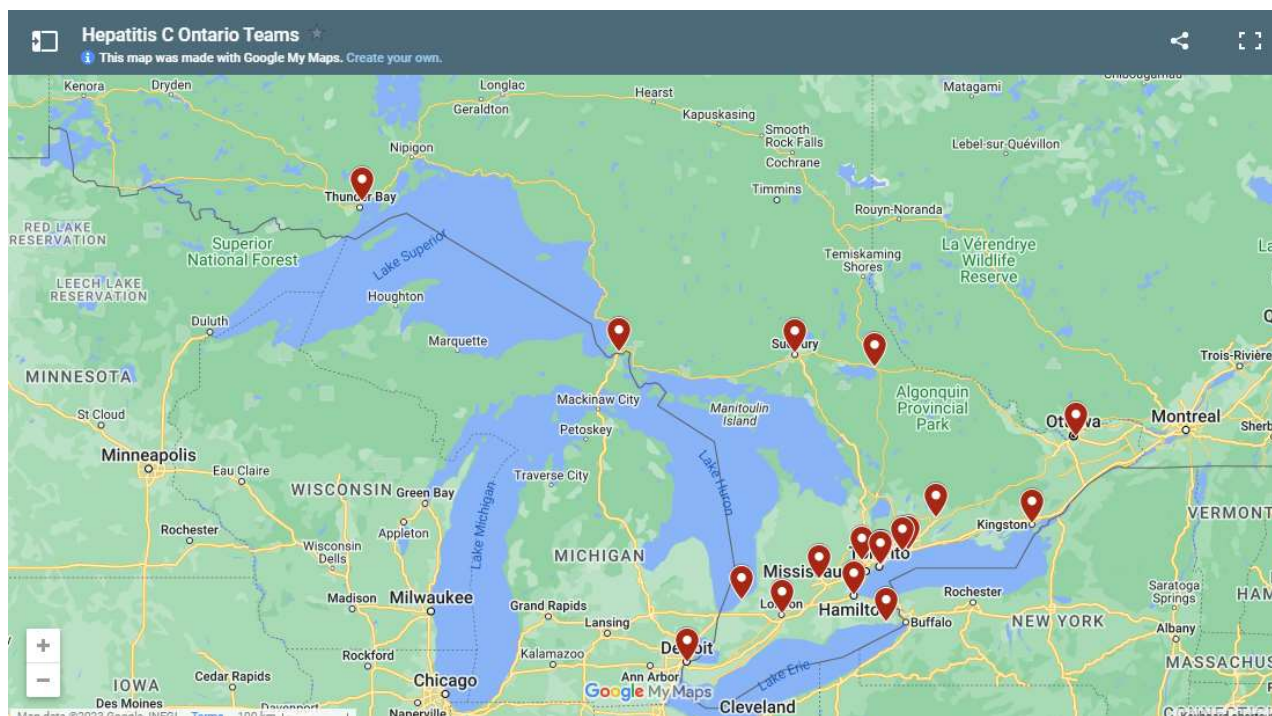
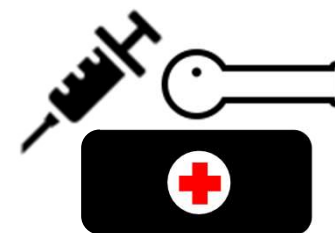
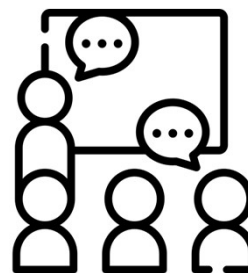
Ministry of Health

# Ontario Hepatitis C Elimination Roadmap Webinar

May 10, 2023

# Ministry of Health & Hepatitis C

## Multidisciplinary hepatitis C Teams



# Ministry of Health & Hepatitis C – Cont'd

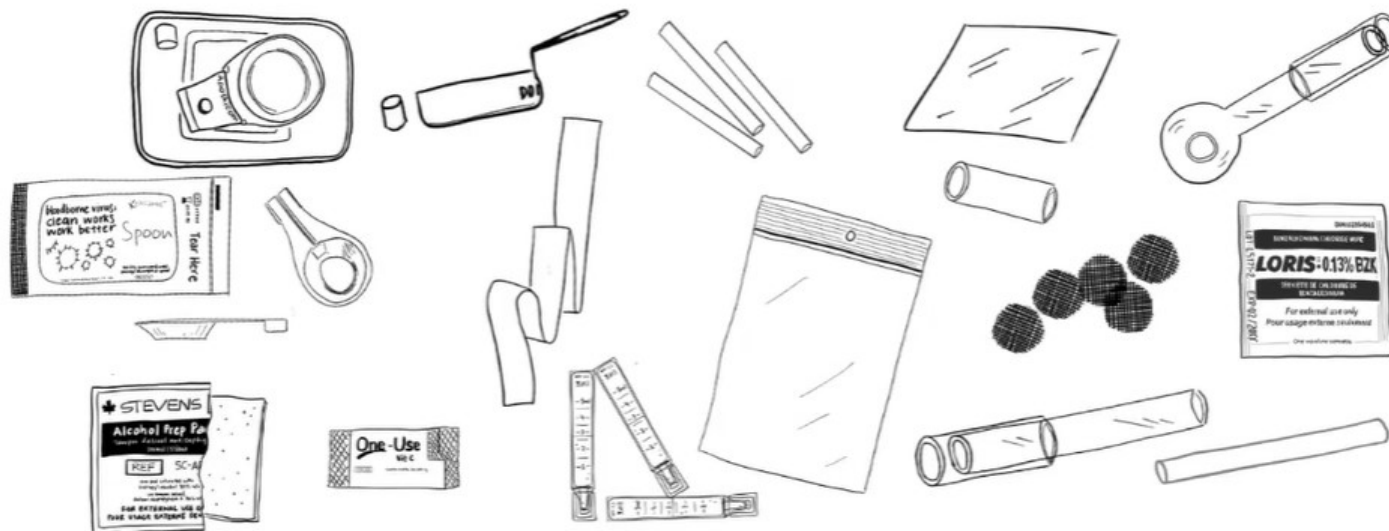
## Ministry Hepatitis C Working Group



- Ontario Drug Benefit program for criteria for public coverage of hep C treatment drugs:
  - Eligible prescribers broadened (2020)
  - Options to demonstrate proof of chronic hep C (2021)
- Recent adoption of hep C RNA reflex testing (2023)

# Ministry of Health & Hepatitis C – Cont'd

## Ontario Harm Reduction Distribution Program (OHRDP)



Source: OHRDP

Looking for harm reduction supplies? Go to: <https://ohrdp.ca/find-supplies/>

# Ministry of Health & Hepatitis C – Cont'd

## Ontario Hepatitis C Elimination Roadmap

