UPRRAI TE OF TELEMEDICINE BY A HEPATITIS C TREATMENT PROGRAMME IN LOUISIANA, USA

TAVELL KINDALL
ST. THOMAS COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER, LOUISIANA, USA

PRE-PANDEMIC PHASE: THE STATE OF AFFAIRS
St. Thomas Community Health Center (CHC) is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) providing comprehensive primary and specialty care to underserved patients in the New Orleans region of Louisiana. Its HCV treatment programme utilised face-to-face consultations as a standard of care to manage and treat patients with HCV.

PANDEMIC PHASE: THE PROBLEM
Given that the population served by this FQHC is most affected by COVID-19, it was critical to transition the entire Hep C treatment programme to a telemedicine model in order to continue care and minimise significant health consequences associated with COVID-19 exposure to patients and staff.

THE SOLUTION
- All initial consultations and SVR12 visits performed via telemedicine
- Liver assessment undertaken at outpatient community imaging centres. Face-to-face consultations available for patients with any indications that a physical examination may be required, or serologic, imaging or historical evidence indicating advanced liver disease/cirrhosis
- Medications delivered to the patient’s address
- Multistakeholder involvement including community organisations involved in the referral of patients, pharmacies, courier services and the infectious diseases department
- Communication via secure email and the electronic medical record

POST-PANDEMIC: FUTURE PERSPECTIVES
- Patients have expressed satisfaction with the telemedicine service
- The treatment of non-cirrhotic patients could be done entirely via telemedicine
- St. Thomas CHC is in the process of embedding telemedicine as a new standard of care

79 PATIENTS CURED since July 2019

1. About St. Thomas. Available at: https://www.stthomaschc.org/about/ (accessed August 2020); 2. Kindall T, personal communication.

Integrated Symposium of The Digital International Liver Congress ™ 2020. This meeting has been organised and funded by Gilead Sciences Europe Ltd.