

HCSP TRAINING MANUAL

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Alan Franciscus, Editor-in-Chief



The information in this guide is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

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THE HEPATITIS C SUPPORT PROJECT

The Hepatitis C Support Project (HCSP) is a registered non-profit organization founded in 1997 by Alan Franciscus and other HCV-positive individuals to address the lack of education, support, and services available at that time for the HCV population.

HCSP's mission is to provide unbiased information, support, and advocacy to all communities affected by HCV, including medical providers. Our first endeavor was to establish a support group in San Francisco specifically for HCV-positive people at QuanYin Healing Arts Center. Our support group format was unique within the hepatitis C community in that we focused on emotional support. This support group was modeled after the support group format developed by the AIDS Health Project of the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF), but was structured to meet the specific needs of our HCV-positive and HIV/HCV-coinfected members. The following year we introduced HCV informational meetings in San Francisco and helped other HCV-positive people from around the San Francisco Bay Area start their own support groups.

The level of information on HCV in 1997 was minimal, with more misinformation than quality information available to the HCV community. Our goal was to provide high quality materials that were accessible and easy to understand. We wanted to help people understand HCV so that they could advocate for themselves and others and make educated decisions regarding management and treatment of HCV. The first material we developed was the HCV Information Packet. We designed the packet in copy-ready format and encouraged individuals and agencies to reprint it as needed. Today, this document is the foundation of our educational materials and is consistently updated to contain the latest information. The latest version is called *Understanding HCV: A Patient Pocket Guide*. In addition to the HCV Information Packet, we have developed other educational materials that are considered by many providers, support staff, and patients to be the best materials available to the community.

Additionally in 1997, HCSP decided that there was a need for an HCV pa-

tient newsletter to specifically address the unique needs of our community. The *HCV Advocate* newsletter was launched in January 1998. Our goal was to provide unbiased information to help people make educated healthcare decisions. The first couple of issues contained only articles reprinted from other organizations. Soon thereafter we began to produce original articles aimed at people with HCV. The newsletter is designed to meet the needs of providers, support staff, patients, prisoners and their families. The *HCV Advocate* quickly grew in size and stature, and is now considered one of the most informative and respected HCV publications in the U.S.

In 1998, HCSP determined that another unmet need for people with HCV was a web site focusing on quality education, advocacy, and support for the HCV community. The *HCV Advocate* web site went online in 1999. It began with a minimum of information, but quickly grew in size and quality of content to become a valuable resource for both people with HCV and healthcare providers. The success of the web site stems from the fact that HCSP continually adds new educational content and tools, such as our CME program for medical providers, various interactive learning modules, quizzes and over 200 fact sheets and comprehensive guides. Thanks to our ongoing growth and the valuable services we provide, web site traffic has quickly grown to an average of more than 500,000 hits per week.

TRAINING WORKSHOPS

The HCSP HCV Training program is an intensive one-day workshop that provides the necessary skills and knowledge for people to go out into their communities and educate others about hepatitis C. Workshop participants who successfully complete the workshop learn the information necessary to conduct a basic HCV presentation. In addition, the training workshop provides background information on HCV so that trainees are able to address audience questions. Workshop participants who successfully complete the course are certified as Basic Hepatitis C Educators by HCSP for a period of one year. Annual recertification is also available through www.hcvadvocate.org.

We conservatively estimate that every workshop participant will affect 50 people on average through education and support. To date HCSP has certi-

fied over 10,000 individuals who will have an impact on about 500,000 people each year. The overall goal for this program is to provide a pool of HCSP-accredited trainers throughout the United States, thus increasing the education and support available to communities affected by hepatitis C.

In 2011 HCSP launched a series of ½ day advanced pilot training workshops that provide information about the new HCV protease inhibitor combination therapies as well as important updates on the new testing technologies, pre- and post- test counseling messages, and national, state, and local resources. The aim of the workshops is to provide the attendees with the most current tools available so that they can better support and serve their clients.

What Can Participants Expect from the Training?

The HCV Training Workshop is now an intensive one-day and/or ½ day workshop that will provide the participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to educate others about hepatitis C. The goal of each workshop is to provide high quality education about HCV that will help certified educators provide education, support, and advocacy for people affected by HCV and HIV/HCV coinfection in their own communities. The course will provide basic information about hepatitis C, and also some of the background information participants may need to address questions from their audiences.

We will work closely with workshop attendees to help ensure that they pass this program. However, it is the responsibility of the participant to invest the time and effort needed to successfully complete the course. Students are required to participate in exercises and are encouraged to ask questions so that they fully understand the material.

We hope that this workshop will be a positive experience. Participants should come prepared to work hard, but also to have some fun!

Requirements for Certification

- Participants are required to attend the entire one-day workshop.
- Participants will complete a take-home quiz prior to the workshop and two quizzes during the workshop. Participants must have a cumulative score of 80% or higher to pass the course.

- Plan of Action: all participants will be required to list three outreach and/or educational objectives to accomplish within the next 12 months. In order to be recertified in 12 months they will be asked to describe how those objectives were met.

Pointers for Newly Trained Educators

- Always provide a disclaimer that any medical information that is provided should always be verified by a medical provider.
- Encourage audience members to ask questions.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say exactly that and do not try to guess or skirt the issue. Try to get the contact information of the person and tell them that you will follow up with the answer. If you tell someone you will contact them, make every effort to do so!
- Know your audience and dress appropriately.
- Be sensitive to the use of appropriate language, and respect cultural and community diversity.

What Can Participants Do with HCSP Certification?

Participants who successfully complete the training workshop will be certified as a Basic Hepatitis C Educator by HCSP for a period of one year. Annual recertification will be available and will require documentation of HCV education efforts post certification.

Participants are free to use the information in this workshop to provide education to individuals and organizations as they see fit. We cannot tell people whether or not to charge or how much to charge for their educational efforts. We realize that people have to earn a decent living wage for their time and effort. However, we sincerely hope that a portion of the efforts will be devoted to educating agencies that provide direct services to underserved communities at nominal or no cost.

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Alan Franciscus, Editor-in-Chief



Alan Franciscus
Executive Director
Editor-in-Chief, HCSP
Publications

Author
Alan Franciscus, Editor-in-Chief

Managing Editor, Webmaster
C.D. Mazoff, PhD

Contact Information
Hepatitis C Support Project
PO Box 427037
San Francisco, CA 94142-7037
alanfranciscus@hcvadvocate.org

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