

LATEST STATS: HCV ON THE RISE

The latest numbers for Nova Scotia show an increase in the number of new cases of hepatitis C in 2012. After a much celebrated decrease down to 207 cases in 2011, this province saw an increase in 2012 to a total of 250 new cases.

HepNS to host an Atlantic Conference

In November, HepNS is hosting "Hip not Hep: the Conference" a gathering of folks from across the Atlantic provinces to talk about hepatitis C prevention strategies for youth.

This conference, funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, is based on the findings of our own Hip not Hep: Safer Tattooing and Piercing project which has delivered workshops across Nova Scotia to literally thousands of junior high school aged youth.

For more information about the conference, email Fey at admin@hepns.ca

HEPATITIS DAY: HEPNS PLANS

In a slight departure from our norm, HepNS this year will be taking to the streets, literally. Not on World Hepatitis Day July 28th, but instead on Saturday July 27 for the Annual Halifax Pride Parade!

Come out (!) join the parade or watch as HepNS does its first Pride Parade float! Great music, give-aways and great volunteers! Or, if parades aren't your thing, join us in the Garrison Grounds between noon and six where HepNS will be giving away t-shirts, buttons and pamphlets while they last.

Hope we see you there!



PEER SUPPORT PROGRAMS: ONLINE AND IN-PERSON

In October of 2012, HepNS launched an online support website to provide a space where people affected by hepatitis can connect with each other, to provide peer support, education and information. HepNS staff, healthcare professionals and service providers also provide regular content, support and education.

As of this summer, this online community has 33 members and over 118 posts. Here is one member's journey:

Today is Monday, April 1st. I finished my treatment on March 20th. My last shot of Interferon was on March 14th. Wow.....I am finished.

I just want to say that I find it so strange to not be on treatment any longer. Don't get me wrong.....I don't ever want to do it again, but after 24 weeks of taking so much medication and giving myself the shot of Interferon every Thursday night for 24 weeks, it just feels very strange to not do any of that any longer. The drugs that I was taking (Incivek for the first 12 weeks, Ribavirin and Interferon for the full 24 weeks) are very, very strong and powerful drugs. They do so much to your body and system.

I had my blood work done on March 25th and I have not received the results yet. I do expect to hear that I continue to be Undetected and that my blood is fine. I am looking forward to having my blood work done in June as this is when I will find out for sure if I am cured (SVR). I know I am.....I know I was cured at the 4 week mark when I was Undetected.....I just need to have the doctor confirm this in June and then that will be it. The Hep-C will only be something I used to have. I am looking forward to hearing that news and be done with it all.

My treatment went fairly smoothly after I finished the Incivek in late December. As you may recall, I suffered greatly with the nausea from the Incivek. It was very, very hard. Since that ended in December, I have been relatively side effects free. I suffer a little with muscle aches and pains but not much. I have never had any bad side effects from either the Ribavirin or the Interferon. I think I was pretty lucky on that part.

It will be a while before I am back to the old me. I know that I think I feel pretty good right now but as my NP (nurse practitioner) told me, I have been feeling like this for so long that I think I am okay. She said that when I start to feel like my old self, I will realize how badly I was feeling. That makes sense and I am looking forward to getting my old energy back and to get back running out on the road. I think I miss that part of my old life the most.....running. Once my blood gets back to normal levels, I will start up my running again and it will take some time before I get back to where I was before treatment started.

Things are going great for me. I will post another blog when I get my blood work results back and let everyone know how things are going. Thanks for reading this blog and I wish all of you good health and happy days.

Believer

continued over..

ABOUT HEPNS

HepNS is a charitable organization that reduces the impact of hepatitis through support, information and education.

Community Connections is a quarterly informative publication of the Hepatitis Outreach Society of Nova Scotia. We welcome your comments and contributions.

If you would like to contribute to the work of HepNS, see the "Sponsors" page on our website: www.HepNS.ca

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SUPPORT CONTINUED.....

July 16th...Hello everyone!!!! I won't be long on this blog, just need to share my most exciting news that I just received:

My NP, Carla, just called to tell me that the results of my 12 week post treatment blood work is NEGATIVE. That means I am SVR.....cured. I no longer have Hep-C. I can't tell you how happy I am. I just got the call about 10 minutes ago and so I am still trying to get my head around it. This is the news I waited for since the day I was diagnosed in 2011. I went through 24 weeks of treatment (not very nice, as you know) and now it is paying off.

I am SVR.....I am SVR.....I am SVR. Wow...nice to say this.

I just want to thank everyone for reading my blogs, sending me support and good wishes and following me on my treatment journey. I will probably not write any further blogs as I am totally cured and will be living a wonderful, healthy, Hep-C free life.

Bless you all and everyone, take care!!!!!!

Believer

The online community is accessible through our website www.hepns.ca However, if in-person support is your style there is a monthly support group meeting the first Friday of every month at the North End Community Health Centre at 11 am. The next two meetings are on August 2nd and September 6.

For more information contact Fey at 902-420-1767.

HEPNS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome Fey

This Spring HepNS welcomed a new staff member to the office. Fey Isukuru joined HepNS as the Office Administrator and can be reached at admin@hepns.ca

Auction Success

As many of you know, HepNS held its first Online Facebook Auction in May. As a pilot project, it was a tremendous success. Thank you to our 24 donors (see them listed on our website under "supporters") and to the 34 bidders, who together helped HepNS raise \$1,427!



Join Team HepNS on
Sunday, September 22nd
for the AIDS Walk for Life

Sixty percent of all money raised by our team is used by HepNS to provide prevention workshops and information about HIV/HCV co-infection. The other forty percent goes to the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia—win, win!

To register and to join our team go to: <http://www.aidswalkforlife.ca/Halifax.htm>