

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of the INHSU Africa Follow-up Event that was held with South African Partners on 28 July 2020 to mark World Hepatitis Day. This event was a partnership between INHSU, TB HIV Care, the South African Network of People who Use Drugs (SANPUD), the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC), the National Department of Health, the Central Drug Authority and the National Department of Social Development.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This event was one of a series of activities that followed a regional meeting held in Cape Town South Africa in February 2020 (INHSU Africa 2020). The Regional meeting was held to provide a platform for people who use drugs, policymakers, political decision-makers, advocates and clinicians working in the African region to come together to reflect on current work to respond to the issues of HIV and viral hepatitis and the impacts on people who use drugs. At the meeting, there was a commitment for ongoing work. INHSU was supported by the Open Societies Foundation to facilitate work in two focal countries – South Africa and Kenya. While work commenced soon after the regional meeting, the emergence of the global COVID-19 pandemic shortly after necessitated the pausing of this work until lockdowns were eased in both countries. In late May the project restarted and efforts were made to re-engage delegates regarding current priorities and how to support ongoing projects.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

This event was designed as an opportunity to launch the Connecting with Care South Africa Digital Story, and reflect on the status of viral hepatitis prevention, treatment and care, particularly for people who use drugs, in South Africa. While this film was profiled at INHSU Africa 2020, it had yet to be launched more broadly. In addition, the event provided an opportunity to connect with policy makers and decision makers to raise the issues, and mobilise support to increase collective efforts around hepatitis prevention, treatment and care and the health and rights of people who use drugs both in South Africa and beyond.

ROUNDTABLE PREPARATION, FORMAT AND PARTICIPATION

A one hour virtual session was organised on the Zoom meeting platform. All South African delegates from INHSU Africa 2020, as well as other invited attendees who were not able to attend the February meeting were invited to attend.

Over 120 people registered for the event, and 96 attendees participated in the event. The event was hosted by INHSU, TB HIV Care and the South African Network of People who Use Drugs (SANPUD). Harry Hausler (TB HIV Care CEO) welcomed participants, Charity Monareng (TB HIV Care Parliamentary and Advocacy Officer) chaired the event and Jason Grebely (INHSU President) closed the event.

Event Activities and discussion

A copy of the recording of the event can be viewed [here](#).

Launch and showing of Connecting with Care South Africa

The digital storyteller Conor Ashleigh introduced the film and the film was shown to the participants. The film can be viewed [here](#).

World Hepatitis Day Event South Africa
Panel Discussion

Four participants from the film were invited to participate in a panel discussion and share their experiences of living through this very difficult period of COVID-19. Participants included Koketso Mokubane, Charlene Mattafin, Monique Marks and Mark Sonderup.

Engagement with sponsor organisations

Key institutions supporting hepatitis C prevention, treatment and care for people who use drugs in South Africa were invited to share their reflections. These were provided by:

- Dr Zuki Pinini: Chief director HIV/AIDS and STIs, South African National Department of Health
- Ms Coceka Nogoduka: Acting CEO of the South African National AIDS Council
Hon Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu: Deputy Minister of the South African National Department of Social Development

Media engagement

Given the focus of this event to raise awareness of the Connecting with Care film, media engagement was a key activity. The following provides a summary of media interest in the event

Media House and link to media clip	Interviewee
eNCA	Dr Andrew Scheibe
SABC KZN	Prof Monique Marks
Africa Channel	Prof Mark Sonderup
CapeTalk	Charity Monareng
Radio 2000	Prof Johann Hugo
Radio 786	Charity Monareng
Voice of the Cape	Dr Andrew Scheibe
Radio 702	Angela MacBride
Smile 9 0.4	Prof Mark Sonderup
The Globe - SABC	Dr Andrew Scheibe
eTV channel	Charity Monareng
Times Live	Press release
Sowetan	Press release
Westville and Duran Times	Press Release

REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

This event was very successful around raising the profile of the important advocacy resource, as well as highlighting the fact that issues are even more important in the context of COVID-19.

The involvement of high level officials including parliamentarians, and senior management with government ministries and multi-sector HIV and hepatitis platforms was a particular success in having the support of champions in decision making roles.

Engaging the media enabled further amplification of key messages and the expansion of the audience.