

**Dr. Kevin Lai Inc., M.B., FRCPC. CCDS**  
**Internal Medicine**

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16 – 1529 Dufferin Crescent  
Nanaimo, BC V9S 5H6

TELEPHONE: (250) 753-3646  
FAX: (250) 753-3548

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Hepatitis C Patients requiring Treatment

Patients with hepatitis C genotype 1 should be treated with regimens that include a specific protease inhibitor such as Boceprevir or Telaprevir. Earlier this week Pharmacare agreed to fund Boceprevir but I do not have the details on the qualifying conditions. Triple therapy provokes more side-effects so require much closer supervision from both physician and nursing.

If your patient has access to a triple drug regimen then they could be considered for treatment in Nanaimo if adequate support available. You could contact hepatitis treatment nurse Ms. Fran Falconer at the Viral Hepatitis Service if she could help with your patients' treatment. Then you could refer your patient to either Drs. Forrest, Phillips or Roe to help supervise.

For genotype 1 patients without access to specific protease inhibitors the only option remains to enroll in a clinical trial. Dr. Ghesquiere in Victoria, Drs Yoshida, Steinbrecher and Erb at the Vancouver Hospital and Dr Ramji at the Pacific Gastroenterology Group may have studies recruiting patients. The Travel Assistance Program may actually make it easier to travel to Vancouver if transportation difficult.

The treatment for genotypes other than type 1 remains Peg INF plus Ribavirin. This could be arranged with Ms. Fran Falconer as well with Drs Phillips and Roe to help supervise if you do not wish to do so. Dr. Forrest or any of the above could help with the decision whether to treat. Genotypes 2 and 3 should definitely be considered for treatment.

There is also a VIHA funded hepatitis program at Campbell River Hospital.

I hope that the above is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Lai, M.B., FRCPC  
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