



Responding to the Threat of Viral Hepatitis to the Health of the United States

Why is it important to address viral hepatitis?

Millions of Americans from all walks of life are living with viral hepatitis and are at increased risk for serious liver disease, liver cancer, and even death. We are losing ground in the battle against viral hepatitis. The opioid epidemic that is gripping parts of the United States is fueling increases in new viral hepatitis infections. New hepatitis C infections increased nearly 300 percent from 2010 and 2015. In 2012, hepatitis C-related deaths surpassed deaths from all other reportable infectious diseases combined.



3.5 MILLION PEOPLE
are estimated to be living with hepatitis C,

and

850,000 PEOPLE
are estimated to be living with hepatitis B.

WE ARE MISSING KEY OPPORTUNITIES TO SAVE LIVES AND IF WE DON'T ACT NOW THINGS WILL ONLY GET WORSE.

The hepatitis B vaccine prevents new infections, but not enough people get vaccinated. Hepatitis B treatment can prevent disease progression, and hepatitis C treatment can cure the infection in nearly all individuals. Treating people with hepatitis C at every stage of liver disease could:

- Reduce future healthcare costs by an estimated \$3.3 billion;
- Save more than 320,000 American lives; and
- Eliminate a major health problem in the United States.

The National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan 2017-2020 Vision: The United States will be a place where new viral hepatitis infections have been eliminated, where all people with chronic hepatitis B and C know their status, and everyone with chronic hepatitis B and C has access to high quality health care and curative treatments, free from stigma and discrimination.

The Action Plan is a strategic framework that fosters collaboration across diverse sectors of society and to better serve affected populations. It highlights the commitment of more than 20 federal partners working together to fight viral hepatitis in partnership with states, counties, cities, and hundreds of organizations around the country.

The Action Plan is designed to put the United States on the path toward eliminating viral hepatitis and focuses on these goals:

-  Prevent new viral hepatitis infections;
-  Reduce deaths and improve the health of people living with viral hepatitis;
-  Reduce viral hepatitis health disparities; and
-  Coordinate, monitor, and report on implementation of viral hepatitis activities.

Measuring Progress: The Action Plan also identifies key indicators that will be used to monitor progress toward these national goals. But these goals can only be achieved through active involvement of every sector, including federal, state, and local; both public and private.

Priority Populations

Certain populations have higher rates of new or existing viral hepatitis infections, are more likely to die, and/or are at risk for transmitting viral hepatitis, including:

- > Baby boomers
- > People who inject drugs (PWID)
- > American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN)
- > Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI)
- > African Americans
- > People in correctional facilities
- > Veterans
- > Homeless individuals
- > Men who have sex with men (MSM)
- > Pregnant women
- > People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH) and viral hepatitis coinfection

Challenges in Addressing Viral Hepatitis

The Action Plan also seeks to address a number of challenges that must be confronted as we work to improve our national response including:

- > Limited data
- > Low provider awareness and low public awareness and perceived risk
- > Limited public health and health system response
- > The perceived high costs of treatment and the large numbers of people chronically infected
- > Stigma and discrimination
- > Opioid epidemic

Major Advances and Opportunities

The Action Plan seeks to leverage important advances and opportunities as we work to achieve its goals by improving and expanding:

- > Viral hepatitis testing
- > Prevention strategies
- > Viral hepatitis treatment

Everyone has a role to play in the national response to viral hepatitis and in the fight against related stigma and discrimination. Organizations and individuals from around the country are stepping up to do their part and make the Action Plan a reality. **Won't you join us?**

We have the knowledge and tools to win the fight against viral hepatitis!

To read the full Action Plan and learn how you can join us, visit hhs.gov/hepatitis.