



California Poised to Open Up Access to Hepatitis C Treatment

Medi-Cal will soon begin providing treatment access to almost all state-insured patients living with the virus.

July 3, 2018 By [Casey Halter](#)

Big news on the treatment access front: This month, California will begin opening up access to hepatitis C virus (HCV) treatment to almost all of its state-insured patients living with the virus, [California Healthline reports](#).

Over the past four years, Medi-Cal, the state's Medicaid program, has limited coverage of next-gen treatments to most of its patients. Under previous guidelines, only people with liver scarring, women of childbearing age, active injection drug users, HIV-positive people and members of other so-called high-risk groups have been able to access treatment.

That has left thousands of California patients unable to get coverage for their medications since new treatments became available at the end of 2013. However, according to state health officials, this month, Medi-Cal is expected to loosen its restrictions and begin providing drugs to almost all state-insured patients living with the virus as long as they are at least 13 years old and have more than one year to live.

Governor Jerry Brown and state lawmakers have already set aside \$70 million in next year's budget to address the costs associated with expanding access to treatment. The new budget went into effect July 1.

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