Can the United States Eliminate Hepatitis B and C By 2030?

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The elimination of hepatitis C virus (HCV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV) as public health threats in the United States is entirely possible by 2030, says a new consensus report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine.

The report, titled “A National Strategy for the Elimination of Hepatitis B and C” also outlines specific actions the group believes the U.S. must carry out over the next 15 years in order to reach this ambitious goal.

The National Academies’ recommendations to end hepatitis B and C by 2030 span five areas: public information, essential interventions, service delivery, financing elimination and research. Key goals detailed in the report include ending perinatal hepatitis B transmission, expanding adult HBV vaccination, ensuring universal access to hepatitis C treatment, increasing access to harm reduction services, addressing HBV and HCV in the criminal justice system and improving viral hepatitis testing across the country.

The organization also underscored that the United States will need to provide sufficient funding and leadership over the next 15 years in order to meet the 2030 goal.

The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR), a coalition of 500 organizations working to fight and ultimately end the hepatitis B and C epidemics in the United States, has praised the report and is pushing the United States to implement the Academies’ strategy.

“In keeping with the top recommendation in the report, we strongly urge the Trump administration to immediately take steps to ensure that the highest level of the federal government develops and oversees a coordinated effort to manage viral hepatitis elimination,” said Ryan Clary, executive director of NVHR.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) hepatitis B and hepatitis C are currently the leading causes of liver cancer in the country; together, they kill more people than all other infectious diseases (including HIV) combined. An estimated five million people are living with hepatitis B or C in the United States today.

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