



Chelsea Clinton Weighs in on Viral Hepatitis Elimination Goal

Eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030 requires support and funding from organizations large and small.

May 22, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

In an [opinion piece](#), author and global health advocate Chelsea Clinton emphasized the importance of education, vaccination and treatment for people living with [viral hepatitis](#), which affects almost [400 million people worldwide](#) and kills more than 1 million each year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The article was cowritten by Finn Jarle Rose, the executive director of The Hepatitis Fund.

Almost [90% of people](#) living with hepatitis do not know their status. Clinton compared the testing rates for [hepatitis C virus \(HCV\)](#) with those for HIV during the early years of that epidemic. “But it doesn’t have to be this way,” she [wrote](#).

The WHO’s goal of eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030 is achievable. In fact, Egypt, which once had one of the highest rates of hepatitis C virus in the world, recently [succeeded in eliminating HCV](#) in its entire population. It did so “through a partnership approach that engaged civil society, the private sector, and philanthropic organizations to mobilize the community and increase rates of screening, diagnosis, and treatment,” wrote Clinton.

The United States is also striving to meet this 2030 goal. High-quality, inexpensive generic drugs are available to cure HCV. For [hepatitis B virus \(HBV\)](#), there’s a vaccine to prevent new infections, and for those who already have HBV, medications can prevent liver disease and death. What’s more, pregnant women can take a vaccine and antiviral prophylaxis to prevent HBV transmission, and various harm reduction methods can prevent HCV among people who use intravenous drugs.

In addition to the public health benefits, eliminating hepatitis “makes good economic sense.” In fact, by 2027, investment in HCV could result in \$46 billion in cumulative productivity gains and become cost-saving, according to a [recent global model](#).

“The lack of progress in the response to viral hepatitis comes down to a lack of financial investment by donors and countries,” Clinton wrote. “One hundred and twenty-four countries have developed plans to eliminate viral hepatitis, but without funding, it’s impossible to get those plans off the ground, let alone scale them.”

Clinton emphasized the necessity for donor investment to help eliminate viral hepatitis. “And we aren’t just talking about billion-dollar investments,” she wrote. “Small-scale investments—as little as \$250,000 per country annually—in local organizations working on hepatitis elimination can galvanize governments to make the additional domestic investments necessary to put their countries on the path to elimination.”

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