Obama Seeks to Double Funding for Division of Viral Hepatitis

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The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR) believes President Obama has shown a strong commitment to addressing the hepatitis B and C viruses (HBV and HCV) in his Fiscal Year 2016 budget, according to an NVHR press release.

Obama's new budget, which was released February 2, still needs to be approved by Congress. It would double the funding for the Division of Viral Hepatitis at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to a total of $63 million.

The increase would significantly boost efforts to meet the goals outlined in the Obama administration's Action Plan for the Prevention, Care and Treatment of Viral Hepatitis. The money would help expand hepatitis B and C testing, linkage to care services, increase hep B vaccinations and improve hepatitis surveillance strategies by state and local health departments.

The financial boost would go toward prevention strategies targeting young people who inject drugs as well. Specifically, Obama's budget proposes allowing the use of federal funds for syringe exchange programs and increasing funding for programs that address opioid and heroin addiction.

The proposed budget would also allocate additional hep C treatment resources to the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is struggling financially due to the high cost of new HCV drugs.

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