Hep C Treatment Guidelines Re-Stress That Treatment Is for All

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National hepatitis C virus (HCV) treatment guidelines written by two physicians' groups have been revised to underline the authors' stance that treatment will benefit almost all people living with the virus, regardless of disease severity.

The American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) issued a new chapter in their hep C treatment guidelines in August that instructs clinicians on how to prioritize care among patients seeking a cure. The language of the guidelines implies that they were established in anticipation of a possible shortage of clinicians and money to pay for hep C treatment. However, members of the panel of 27 liver disease and infectious disease specialists who developed the guidelines did stress in August that they ultimately recommended treatment for all.

The issue of prioritization is particularly sensitive, because many state Medicaid programs have begun instituting policies restricting coverage of the expensive hep C treatments to those with advanced liver disease. The guidelines from AASLD and IDSA may serve as a model for such restrictions.

The guidelines state that the only HCV-positive individuals who will not benefit from hep C treatment are those who are not expected to live more than another year because of liver disease complications.

The revised guidelines also stress that urgent treatment is recommended for those with advanced fibrosis or compensated cirrhosis.

To read the revised guidelines (the revision is highlighted at the top of the page), click here.

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