May is Hepatitis Awareness Month

May 1, 2014 By Ron Valdiserri

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Throughout May, during this year's observance of Hepatitis Awareness Month, federal colleagues from across the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Veterans Affairs will be engaged in a variety of activities to increase awareness—among the public and healthcare providers—about viral hepatitis. Federal partners will be working to raise awareness of the importance of vaccination for hepatitis B, testing for hepatitis B and C, the availability of effective care and curative treatment, and the serious health consequences resulting from undiagnosed and untreated viral hepatitis.

Public health leaders at the federal, state and local level will key their efforts to the actions outlined in the recently updated Action Plan for the Prevention, Care and Treatment of Viral Hepatitis, which was released earlier this month. In addition to promoting these observances, throughout May leaders in the field of viral hepatitis will actively seek to engage a broader mix of partners from both public and private sectors, in activities that will help raise awareness about viral hepatitis and move us closer toward achieving the Action Plan's goals. The updated Action Plan provides a framework and focus around which all key stakeholders can engage to strengthen our nation's response to viral hepatitis and leverages opportunities to ensure a coordinated national effort. If you haven't had an opportunity to review the updated plan, you can download it [PDF 2.01MB] here and read a blog post introducing it by Assistant Secretary for Health Dr. Howard Koh.

As many of you know, May 19 is national Hepatitis Testing Day, a date that can be used as a platform for educating the public about this "silent epidemic." Please join us in both of these important observances—Hepatitis Awareness Month and Hepatitis Testing Day—to enhance public awareness of viral hepatitis prevention, testing, care and treatment across the United States. Here are a few things you can do:

- Take this 5-minute online hepatitis risk assessment developed by the CDC and get a personalized report on hepatitis testing and vaccination recommendations.
- Learn more about awareness activities, including testing events, taking place in communities around the country to mark Hepatitis Testing Day. This page from CDC allows people to search

for Hepatitis Testing Day events taking place near them in May. Event organizers can also list their events.

- Review the web badges, digital tools, fact sheets, posters and other resources available from CDC on this page and find one you can use this month.
- Read more about the updated Viral Hepatitis Action Plan on our recently updated page.

For more resources and tools to use in observing Hepatitis Awareness Month and Hepatitis Testing Day, visit this resource page hosted by our colleagues at AIDS.gov.

Working together, we can raise awareness about the epidemic of viral hepatitis in the United States and, in so doing, improve the health of hundreds of thousands of Americans.

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