Hepatitis C Treatment: Standing Up for Yourself

Elizabeth Faraone, now cured of hep C, discusses hep C treatment and the power of advocacy

December 30, 2015 By Elizabeth Faraone

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Chronic hepatitis C viral infection is a systemic disease with multi-organ involvement. Now that great advancements have been made in curing hepatitis C, everyone at risk should be tested. If positive, then the genotype must be identified.

It is extremely important to treat this disease immediately. Currently treatment is being withheld irrationally, indicating that the medical establishment does not necessarily have your best interest at heart. Access to care is especially complicated if you don't have the money or insurance to pay for these new safe and effective medicines. The poor, working class and middle class do not always get medicine through prescription assistance programs, and most aren't even aware that prescription assistance programs exist.

I recommend that all hepatitis C patients (especially those who are in prison) be treated with the new safe and effective medications. Start documenting contact with medical personnel, including attempts to get treatment beginning at the time the appropriate medication was approved by the FDA.

A new medicine will be approved soon that cures all genotypes. Your documentation can be used in future lawsuits. Documentation helps to hold people accountable, which we must do when living in a world where medical ethics are not practiced by everyone.

Here is information about current hepatitis C treatments:
Sovaldi with Olysio
Approved by the FDA on December 6, 2013
For the treatment of GENOTYPE 1 (with the exception of genotype 1a with the Q80K polymorphism)

Harvoni (sofosbuvir/ledipasvir)
Approved by the FDA on October 10, 2014

For the treatment of GENOTYPE 1

Daklinza (to be used in combination with Sovaldi)
Approved by the FDA on July 24, 2015
For the treatment of GENOTYPE 3

Sovaldi/velpatasvir combination
Submitted for approval by the FDA on October 28, 2015
For the treatment of ALL GENOTYPES
WATCH FOR FDA APPROVAL

Insist upon being treated as soon as possible. Do not take “no” for an answer. Document every symptom you experience and every diagnosis of disease made, whether you think it is related to hepatitis C or not. We are only beginning to learn the body’s reaction to the hepatitis C virus.

Document every inappropriate statement made by your doctors and insurance company. Ask your doctor to advocate for you in getting the medicine through prescription assistance programs. You may have to guide your doctor through the process. (Note: The American Civil Liberties Union is pursuing hepatitis C-related litigation in some states, such as Indiana. Here is the ACLU’s link to more information.)

Remember, always advocate for yourself. Everyone deserves the best possible health care.

Elizabeth Faraone is from the New York Metropolitan area and believes she had hepatitis C for over 25 years. She was cured in early 2015 and advocates for the testing and treating of everyone worldwide. Click here to read Elizabeth’s Hep Story.

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