How Michigan Plans to Eliminate Hepatitis C

Drugmaker AbbVie teams with Michigan's Department of Corrections and Department of Health and Human Services to launch "We Treat Hep C."

April 8, 2021 By Trent Straube

Michigan's state health leaders have laid out a plan to end hepatitis C as a health threat in the Great Lakes State. Through the "We Treat Hep C" initiative, launched April 1, they aim to promote universal hepatitis testing and make treatment with Mavyret, an oral tablet, more accessible.

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) attacks the liver; over time, it can lead to liver disease, cancer and death. Hep C is a communicable disease most commonly transmitted through direct blood-to-blood contact, such as by sharing needles and drug paraphernalia, or through blood and organ transplants and tattoos.

It's estimated that as many as 200,000 people are living with hepatitis C virus in Michigan and half of them don't know it, according to a press release for "We Treat Hep C."

"It is crucial that all Michiganders receive a hepatitis C virus screening at least one time in their life, and more frequently if they are in an at-risk category," said Joneigh Khaldun, MD, MPH, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health at the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). "HCV is curable, and we are committed to making both testing and treatment accessible for all residents in need."

The initiative is the result of a partnership between MDHHS, the Michigan Department of Corrections, Michigan Medicaid, Wayne State University's Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center (to train clinicians and develop curricula for the hep C plan) and drugmaker Abbvie, which manufactures the antiviral Mavyret (a combination of the drugs glecaprevir and pibrentasvir). According to the "We Treat Hep C" web page, as of April 1, Mavyret will be the preferred hep C treatment; as such, a prescription for the drug will no longer require prior authorization. However, prior authorization is required for other drugs and will be granted only when Mavyret isn't appropriate.

Mavyret was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2017. Generally, the dosage consists of three tablets taken once daily with food for eight weeks. The duration for treatment-naive people who have compensated Child-Pugh A cirrhosis is also eight weeks.* For more details,

including side effects, see this Hep Mag Basics page.

The "We Treat Hep C" web page offers resources for folks in Michigan seeking information about hepatitis C testing and treatment.

Michigan isn't the only state improving access to hepatitis C treatments. To read about other states doing the same, see "Nevada Budgets $6M to Treat All Prisoners Who Have Hepatitis C" and "North Carolina to Boost Hepatitis C Screenings and Treatment."

Click here to learn the Basics of Hepatitis C. And for more about viral hepatitis and other forms of liver disease such as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), see our Introduction to Hepatitis.

* This article was updated to list the correct treatment duration for HCV-positive people who also have cirrhosis.

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