“Netflix-Style” Hep C Drug Program to Launch in Washington

Are subscription treatment models the future of hepatitis C treatment?

April 30, 2019 By Casey Halter

Late last week, Washington became the second state in the country to adopt a “Netflix-style” model for hepatitis C virus (HCV) treatment, announcing that it has selected AbbVie to provide nearly unlimited access to treatment through an unconventional subscription payment program, BioPharma Dive reports.

The state’s decision follows a similar move by Louisiana, which last month selected a subsidiary of Gilead Sciences to provide hepatitis C treatment through a similar program. Under both models, the state basically pays up-front for access to a limitless supply of medications, much like subscription streaming services Netflix and Amazon Prime offer content to consumers at a flat monthly rate.

The contract, which seeks to expand treatment access while containing drug costs over five years, is part of Washington’s plan to eliminate hepatitis C statewide by 2030. State health authorities say they hope to finalize the contract with AbbVie and start the program by July 1—around the same time the state aims to finalize its broader hep C elimination plan.

Meanwhile, industry analysts are predicting that hepatitis C treatment programs like Washington’s and Louisiana’s will continue to spread. The deals not only help states save money in the long term but also make sense for the companies competing in the HCV treatment market, which will likely begin shrinking as more patients are cured.

In fact, Washington health officials say three companies bid on the state’s contract to provide universal hepatitis C treatment access.

Under the final agreement, Washington will pay up until it has met a certain level of total spending for treating hepatitis C treatment across the state, after which the state will receive drugs for an “extremely low” price.”

To learn more about the fight for hepatitis C treatment access, click here.

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