Program Shows Promise Linking Drug Users to Hepatitis C Care

Linking people with hep C to care and treatment is vital for the push to eradicate the virus.

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A program that facilitated the rapid linkage to medical care for hepatitis C virus (HCV) showed promise among a group of people who inject drugs (PWID) in Texas.

Presenting their findings at the 52nd International Liver Congress in Paris, researchers conducted a prospective, longitudinal study of 1,038 PWID in Austin who were screened and entered into an electronic database between January and October 2017. A total of 503 of them tested positive for chronic hep C infection and were referred to the program that provided linkage to care.

A total of 398 (79 percent) of those who were referred to the service were contacted by a linkage-to-care specialist within 48 hours. The specialists educated these individuals about the virus and referred 249 of them to a medical care provider. Of that group, 116 (47 percent) made it to their first medical appointment; of these, 69 (59 percent) had started treatment for hep C by the time of the analysis.

To read a press release about the study, click here.

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