CDC Message on Liver Disease and COVID-19

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Dear Colleague,

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) posted What to Know About Liver Disease and COVID-19. The new resource addresses concerns related to COVID-19 and viral hepatitis, highlighting what people living with hepatitis B and/or hepatitis C infection can do to protect themselves and maintain their health. It also provides guidance for protecting people at risk for hepatitis A virus infection from the ongoing multi-state hepatitis A outbreaks.

SARS-CoV-2, the cause of COVID-19, is a respiratory virus that can spread from person to person. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, respiratory symptoms, or other symptoms. While most people have mild symptoms, some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. People at higher risk include older adults and people of any age with serious underlying medical conditions, including people with liver disease.

People with liver disease can take action to prevent getting infected with or spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. People taking medicine to treat hepatitis B or hepatitis C should continue treatment, including taking their medicine consistently and following the advice of their health care providers. People who develop symptoms that could indicate they have COVID-19 should talk to their health care provider about how to get evaluated. Please visit the COVID-19 website to learn more about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Some of CDC's recommendations to help people with chronic liver disease protect themselves from COVID-19 and stay healthy include:

- Contact your provider to ensure that your care continues and that you have an adequate supply of any medication you currently take for hepatitis B or hepatitis C.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about getting vaccinated against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, pneumococcal disease, and influenza.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and call your provider if you are exposed to someone with COVID-19 infection.
- Practice good hand washing.
- Avoid large crowds and gatherings.
- Use cloth face coverings when in public.
- Avoid non-essential travel.
- Establish a clinical care plan to communicate with health care providers online or by phone.
- Do not delay getting emergency care if needed.

People with substance use disorder and chronic liver disease should stay in contact with their primary care provider to ensure their care continues, including prescribed treatments. In addition, persons who inject drugs should continue to use sterile injection equipment and talk with their provider about how to access sterile supplies.

We encourage you to review and share these resources with your colleagues, friends, and family.

We recognize that the response to COVID-19 has been a top priority for many people across the United States. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to supporting this vital response. Together, we can make sure we and our families, friends, and communities have the information and resources we need to stay healthy and protect ourselves from COVID-19 and viral hepatitis.

Sincerely,

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