CDC Releases 2017 Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Summary

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Dear Colleagues,

On September 10, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published an online viral hepatitis surveillance summary, Viral Hepatitis Surveillance – United States, 2017, reporting on cases of hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.

The surveillance summary documents that in 2017 the United States experienced increases in acute cases of hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. Hepatitis A cases increased nearly 70% from 2016 to 2017, mostly due to person-to-person outbreaks occurring among people who use drugs, people experiencing homelessness, and men who have sex with other men. Hospitalization rates among reported hepatitis A cases have increased during these outbreaks from 42% in 2016 to 67% in 2017, and hepatitis A-related deaths increased from 70 in 2016 to 91 in 2017. For acute hepatitis B, 2017 surveillance data indicates the highest rate of acute hepatitis B cases among 40-49 year olds for the first time in fifteen years (2002 – 2017). Acute hepatitis C infections have more than tripled since 2010, resulting in more than 44,000 estimated cases in 2017. Alarmingly, acute cases of hepatitis C infection have continued to increase sharply among young adults, driven by injection drug use.

In CDC's report released today, you will see figures that display both the number of reported acute cases and the number of estimated acute cases, accounting for under-ascertainment and under-reporting. This new presentation of the data underscores that the number of reported acute cases in the surveillance summary is only a fraction of the total estimated acute viral hepatitis infections in the United States. In order to move toward reducing the public health threat of viral hepatitis in the United States, additional capacity for surveillance is needed, coupled with increasing access to testing among recommended populations, and access to lifesaving prevention and treatment services for people at-risk for or living with viral hepatitis infection.

I invite you to share the new 2017 surveillance report with your colleagues and thank each of you for your hard work and commitment to viral hepatitis prevention and control.

Sincerely,

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