What EVERYONE Needs to Know about Hepatitis C - Hint: It’s Not What You Think

March 7, 2016 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

If you want to help to eradicate hepatitis C, then please read this. Warning: If you are the kind of person that is turned off by discussions of money and politics, I implore you to keep reading. We can’t eradicate hepatitis C unless we are willing to take some simple, small actions.

This week I am in Washington, D.C. for Hepatitis on the Hill. This annual event focuses on hepatitis B and C federal policy issues. The goal is to increase the federal response to the viral hepatitis epidemic in the United States. The major advocacy groups are attending, and the folks at HEP are committed to getting the word out. This event is hosted by the Hepatitis Appropriations Partnership (HAP), Hep B United (HBU) and the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR).

This is a two-day event. Today I am learning how to be a more effective advocate. I am networking with other hepatitis advocates, hoping to fortify our common resolve to increase awareness and funding for issues relating to viral hepatitis.

Tomorrow, we’ll be on Capitol Hill, visiting the offices of our Senators and House of Representative. We will educate their staff on the experiences of people living with hepatitis B and C. More importantly, we will ask for increased leadership and resources to address the viral hepatitis epidemic in the United States.

Hepatitis C is killing more Americans every year than HIV is, but dollar for dollar, hepatitis C funding is pennies compared to HIV’s funding. State health departments receive less than $1 in federal funding for every person living with viral hepatitis for the Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator program. In the meantime, hepatitis C infection and death rates continue to rise.

There has never been a greater need, or a greater opportunity to make a difference than now. In the coming months, I am going to ask for your help. Don’t worry, I am not going to ask for money. I will be asking for a few minutes of your time. I promise I won’t ask for anything difficult. However, I will be asking for something essential – for you to contact your elected officials and ask them to support the President’s funding request for viral hepatitis services.

Stay tuned and stay determined.

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