Louisiana Rations Hepatitis-C Medicines Based on Discriminatory Guidelines.

December 11, 2017 By Carleen McGuffey

Louisiana has unspent Medicaid resources. A surplus! And yet they refuse to treat people who have Hepatitis-C unless they are stage 3, meet moral obligations, and see an expensive specialist! In other words, Louisiana is happy to ration life-saving medicines based on discriminatory guidelines.

Hepatitis-C is our nations deadliest disease, deadlier than all other 60 infectious diseases combined.

Roughly only 300 of the more than 75,000 Louisianans have been treated for Hep-C, this partly based on Louisiana State Restrictions.

Unacceptable!

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Louisiana Receives 'F' in New Harvard Law School & NVHR Report Card Project Grading Medicaid Programs for Discriminatory Hepatitis C Treatment Restrictions

LA is One of Just Five States to Receive an 'F' in 'Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access,' Which Grades 52 Medicaid Programs & Offers Recommendations to Improve

Dec. 11, 2017 – The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR) and the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School (CHLPI) gave Louisiana an "F" in its new report and interactive project, Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access, which grades all 50 state Medicaid programs, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, according to access to curative treatments for hepatitis C, the nation's deadliest infectious disease.

Louisiana is one of five Medicaid programs that received an “F” for imposing discriminatory restrictions on hepatitis C cures. Specifically, requires hepatitis C patients to demonstrate severe liver damage (a fibrosis score of F3 or greater), 12 months of sobriety, and a prescription from a specialist – who can be costly and difficult to find – before receiving access to treatment.

“More than 75,000 Louisianans are living with hepatitis C, which now kills more Americans each year than all other infectious diseases combined,” said Ryan Clary, executive director of NVHR. “Ensuring Medicaid recipients have access to treatment is a critical step towards ending this devastating virus, making it even more baffling that Louisiana would withhold a cure from patients when it has unspent Medicaid resources. ”

Robert Greenwald, Clinical Professor of Law at Harvard Law School and the director of CHLPI, added, “We know that hepatitis C infections are increasing as a result of the opioid crisis, yet Louisiana is barring patients who have used drugs in the past year, the population most likely to spread this highly communicable disease, from accessing a cure. To address this problem, many Medicaid programs have removed discriminatory hepatitis C treatment restrictions. It’s time for Louisiana to follow suit.”

Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access – which is available online in interactive form at http://stateofhepc.org – grades each state, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, according to its overall “state of access.”

Read the full Louisiana report card here stateofhepc.org/wp-content/themes/infinite-2/reports/HCV_Report_Louisiana.pdf

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