Why We Need a National African American Hepatitis C Action Day

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African Americans have among the highest rates of hepatitis C (HCV), a leading cause of liver cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A recent study found that African Americans are more likely to be deemed ineligible for HCV treatment than other racial groups, even when controlling for other medical factors, suggesting that racial discrimination might contribute to the disparity in HCV treatment eligibility.[1]

Additionally, liver cancer death rates are on the rise in the U.S., and a substantial disparity exists in liver cancer death rates by race/ethnicity. From 1990 to 2014, the liver cancer death rate increased by 57% for African Americans. Compared to non-Hispanic whites, the five-year survival rate in African Americans is approximately 5% lower for all liver cancer stages combined. The racial disparity is most staggering in the District of Columbia, in which the liver cancer death rate for African Americans was found to be more than 4 times higher than that for non-Hispanic whites.[2]

Since 2013, National African American Hepatitis C Action Day has provided an opportunity to promote hepatitis C prevention, testing, and treatment messages to public health partners and the public. This year, the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR) is pleased to partner with the National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS (NBLCA) twice in July. First, we are co-hosting a webinar on July 11, 2017 about National African American Hepatitis C Action Day. The webinar will include information about the history and purpose of Action Day, and perspectives from a healthcare provider, patient, and advocate. For more information about the webinar and to register, click here. Second, on July 25, 2017 (National African American Hepatitis C Action Day), we are partnering with NBLCA to organize a call-in to legislators to protect health care for people living with or at risk for hepatitis C.

If you believe that all people deserve access to appropriate HCV prevention, education, screening, care, and treatment, please join our webinar and National African American Hepatitis C Action Day activities.

For more information about this webinar, contact Tina Broder, NVHR's Program Director.

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Tina Broder MSW, MPH is the Program Director and Bekeela Davila, MPH is the Program Coordinator at the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR), a national coalition dedicated to ending the hepatitis B and C epidemics in the United States.

[1] T Sims, O. (2017). Racial Disparities in Hepatitis C Treatment Eligibility. Annals of hepatology, 16(4), 530.

[2] Islami, F., Miller, K. D., Siegel, R. L., Fedewa, S. A., Ward, E. M., & Jemal, A. (2017). Disparities in liver cancer occurrence in the United States by race/ethnicity and state. CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians.

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