Through Strategic Action, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Can Move the U.S. Toward Elimination of Hepatitis C among People with HIV

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One in four people living with HIV will become infected with hepatitis C (HCV) during their lifetime. In a new issue brief, health policy experts describe the role of the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program in helping to eliminate HCV among people living with HIV. The federal program, which provides a nationwide system of care for uninsured and underinsured people with HIV, has taken a number of steps toward addressing HCV. The issue brief, Eliminating Hepatitis C among People Living with HIV in the United States: Leveraging the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program to Move Us Forward - PDF describes additional actions that are needed.

HCV is the most prevalent bloodborne infection in the United States, with 2.4 million Americans living with the disease leading to 18,000 deaths in 2016. About one in every twenty people with HIV receiving regular medical care has an active HCV infection. HIV treatment advances are leading to major improvements in health for people with HIV, but co-occurring HCV infection can undermine this progress. People with HIV and HCV have worse health outcomes than people who only have HCV; they can experience rapid progression of liver disease and may have difficulty processing HIV antiretrovirals.

In the issue brief, Sonia Canzater and Jeffrey S. Crowley of the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown Law, explain how HCV elimination can be achieved among people living with HIV. Informed by a 2018 consultation with people with HIV and HCV, medical and non-medical providers, and federal and state policy and program staff, the policy researchers identify four priority actions to systematically achieve HCV elimination:

- Comprehensive efforts to overcome financial, clinical, and other barriers to treatment
- Better metrics for tracking progress toward elimination
- Increased emphasis on re-screening of key populations

- Strengthened planning and commitment to HCV elimination in states, communities, and clinics

Find the full news release here.

#PLWH have high rates of #HCV coinfection. Learn how advocates and experts recommend eliminating #HepC in this important population http://go.usa.gov/xyXfm

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