World Hepatitis Day: Working Toward Elimination

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Momentum to address viral hepatitis is building across the nation and around the world. On World Hepatitis Day, July 28, 2019, partners are joining together to raise awareness and "find the missing millions" of people living with hepatitis B and hepatitis C but unaware of their status. Expanding screening for viral hepatitis is a critical step toward viral hepatitis elimination. Leadership from a wide range of stakeholders including states, local jurisdictions, health systems, and non-governmental organizations is needed to improve screening.

Millions of Americans- from every state and all walks of life already have chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C, but only about half of them know they have a serious and potentially deadly infection. Globally, 300 million people are living with viral hepatitis – many of them unaware. On World

Hepatitis Day, we ask you to join in, take action, and raise awareness to help find these undiagnosed “missing millions” and connect them to lifesaving care and treatment.

On World Hepatitis Day, we highlight and celebrate the growing number of hepatitis elimination projects being established across the United States.

3 Examples of Viral Hepatitis Elimination Projects in the United States

- Grady Liver Clinic, Atlanta, GA. The Grady Liver Clinic uses a multidisciplinary team approach to improve access to hepatitis C care for patients with health care disparities. The clinic has been nationally recognized for implementing large scale hepatitis C screening and linkage to care as well as treatment programs. The clinic is leading an HCV elimination effort using a combined approach including widespread screening, linkage to care, antiviral treatment and population management.
- Collaborative care model for HCV micro-elimination in rural VA. The University of Virginia (UVA) and Virginia Department of Health (VDH) are working together in an innovative partnership to expand HCV treatment for rural populations across Virginia using a telehealth and provider education model (HEPC). The HEPC Program was established in Southwest Virginia with a focus on regional micro elimination, and, recognizing the connection between opioid use and hepatitis C transmission, prioritizing the care of those in treatment for opioid use disorder or actively using drugs.
- Curing Hepatitis C among HIV/HCV Coinfected People of Color, multiple locations. This multi-pronged initiative supports the expansion of hepatitis C (HCV) prevention, testing, care, and treatment capacity, improvement of linkage and retention to HCV care, and coordination with SAMHSA-funded substance use disorder (SUD) treatment providers to deliver behavioral health and SUD treatment support to complete treatment and prevent HCV infection and re-infection. Participating programs will also enhance their health department surveillance systems to increase their capacity to monitor acute and chronic infections of HIV and HCV.

3 Steps We Can Take Toward Viral Hepatitis Elimination

A National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) 2017 report found that elimination of hepatitis B and hepatitis C in the United States is possible in the future if we commit to funding and implementing strategic actions. Below, we outline steps that can help the United

States reach elimination.

1. Vaccinate more people. Despite the fact that hepatitis A and B are vaccine-preventable, progress toward hepatitis B elimination has stalled. In 2016, nine states had hepatitis B rates above the Healthy People 2020 goal, including several hard-hit by the opioid crisis.
2. Expand screening practices. A recent study found that expanded screening with treatment as appropriate would be cost-saving if the World Health Organization (WHO) 2030 goals (90% screened, 80% treated) are reached by 2025.
3. Improve linkage to care. Ensure that after a person is diagnosed, they are linked to culturally and linguistically appropriate care and treatment.

To learn more about hepatitis elimination in the United States, these, and other elimination projects, visit our Mapping Hepatitis Elimination in Action page.

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