



Launching a National Hepatitis C Elimination Program in the United States

More than 2 million adults in the United States **have hepatitis C virus**. Even though hepatitis C is now curable with a safe and highly effective oral medication, it **remains a major cause of liver disease, liver cancer, and death**. Hepatitis C infection **kills more than 10,000 Americans and leads to billions of dollars of health care costs every year**.

We can end the unnecessary suffering and death caused by hepatitis C by investing in the Administration's proposed 5-year national hepatitis C elimination program.¹

PROBLEMS		SOLUTIONS
<p>1 in 3² are unaware of their infection.</p>	<p>AWARENESS</p>	<p>Increase awareness of the need for hepatitis C screening through public awareness campaigns and targeted outreach for high-risk populations.</p>
<p>Testing sites are not available in every community.</p> <p>Testing requires multiple steps before any treatment can start.</p>	<p>TESTING</p>	<p>Expand testing locations in communities to increase access.</p> <p>Use new point-of-care tests to allow for rapid testing and treatment.</p>
<p>Medications to cure hepatitis C are expensive.</p>	<p>TREATMENT</p>	<p>Provide access to medications for hepatitis C treatment for high-risk populations through a national subscription program.</p>
<p>Many patients are lost between testing and initiating hepatitis C treatment.</p>	<p>FOLLOW-UP</p>	<p>Render follow-up visits more accessible and convenient with increased locations and types of providers offering hepatitis C treatment, and use telehealth.</p>
<p>Some people with long-term hepatitis C may develop cirrhosis or liver cancer.</p>	<p>LONG-TERM OUTCOMES AND COST-SAVINGS</p>	<p>Initiate a national program to avert (over 10 years):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 24,000 deaths » 20,000 cases of liver cancer » 25,000 cases of chronic kidney disease » 49,000 cases of diabetes <p>SAVE MORE THAN \$18 BILLION, of which \$13.3 billion accrues to the federal government³</p>

¹Fleurence RL, Collins FS. A National Hepatitis C Elimination Program in the United States: A Historic Opportunity. *JAMA*. 2023;329:1251-1252. doi:10.1001/jama.2023.3692.

²Lewis KC, Barker LK, Jiles RB, Gupta N. Estimated Prevalence and Awareness of Hepatitis C Virus Infection Among US Adults: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, January 2017–March 2020. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. 2023; cia441. doi: 10.1093/cid/ciad411.

³Chhatwal J, Aaron A, Zhong H, et al. *Projected Health Benefits and Health Care Savings from the United States National Hepatitis C Elimination Initiative*. National Bureau of Economic Research. 2023. doi:10.3386/w31139.

Tailoring **Awareness**, **Testing**, **Treatment**, and **Follow-up** solutions can eliminate hepatitis C, save thousands of lives, and save billions of dollars.

KEY POPULATIONS EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO HEPATITIS C TREATMENT	HIGH-IMPACT SOLUTIONS
<p>People Who Are Uninsured</p>  <p>Routine, opt-out screening is not offered in most settings where uninsured people seek care.</p>	 <p>Conduct public outreach on a local level with trusted community partners, such as community health workers and community-based organizations.</p>  <p>Co-locate services so patients will encounter hepatitis C testing more frequently.</p>
<p>People Who Are American Indian and Alaska Native</p>  <p>High prevalence of hepatitis C in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.</p> <p>Current multiple-step testing is challenging in remote areas.</p> <p>Chronic staffing shortages at Indian Health Service.</p>	 <p>Increase awareness and reduce stigma by using language-specific and culturally relevant multi-media campaigns and engaging with community partners.</p>  <p>Expand screening locations to include behavioral health settings, emergency rooms, and pharmacies.</p>  <p>Deliver care through pharmacists and use telehealth to link patients to specialists.</p>
<p>People Who Use Medicaid</p>  <p>Less than 1 in 4 of Medicaid beneficiaries with diagnosed hepatitis C get timely treatment.</p>	 <p>Create/establish quality improvement goals at the state level to incentivize providers to treat hepatitis C.</p>  <p>Reimburse case-management activities for social support for patients facing significant barriers to care, including insurance enrollment support and transportation.</p>
<p>People Involved in the Justice System (spent time in jails or prisons)</p>  <p>The prevalence of hepatitis C is up to 30% for people involved in the justice system.</p> <p>Provider shortages in correctional settings.</p> <p>Many lost to follow-up care after reentry into community.</p>	 <p>Increase awareness through evidence-based peer-to-peer training programs and nurse-led education sessions.</p>  <p>Expand use of telehealth, nurse practitioners, and treatment cohort models.</p>  <p>Use case-managers to coordinate care or assist in Medicaid re-enrollment for people involved in the justice system.</p>

Together we can eliminate hepatitis C.