



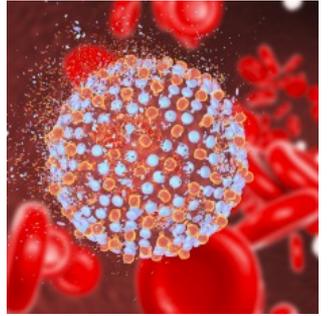
SYNC
2019

FEDERAL ADVOCACY EFFORTS AT THE INTERSECTION OF VIRAL HEPATITIS AND THE OPIOID CRISIS

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CURRENT LANDSCAPE

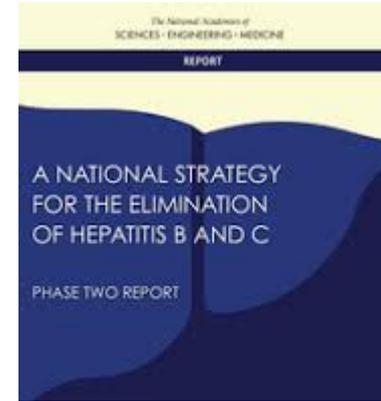
- 2,400,000 total hepatitis C cases in the U.S.
- 2016: 41,700 new hepatitis C cases
- 350% increase between 2010-2016
- 70%+ a result of injection drug use
- One quarter of people living with HIV also are living with hepatitis C
- More than 70,000 overdose deaths in 2017





ELIMINATION

- Elimination is possible
- Now have a cure for hepatitis C
- Multiple reports show it is possible
 - World Health Organization (WHO)
 - National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM);
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Elimination is the overall goal of the National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan (NVHAP)
- In 2016, the U.S. joined the 194-member countries by voting to adopt the first ever Global Viral Hepatitis Strategy, a plan with specific elimination targets established by WHO





ADVOCACY EFFORTS - HHS



- NASEM recommends “the highest level of the federal government should oversee a coordinated effort to manage viral hepatitis activities.”
- Currently, federal efforts to eliminate viral hepatitis are guided by the NVHAP
 - Updated and implemented by the Office of HIV/AIDS and Infectious Disease Policy (OHAIDP)
 - Advocates have provided input to the NVHAP update
- OHAIDP and OASH are essential parts of the federal plan to eliminate viral hepatitis, although neither receives dedicated funding for those activities





ADVOCACY EFFORTS – CDC VIRAL HEPATITIS PROGRAMS



CDC

- Currently funded at \$39M, community requesting a \$95M increase
- Additional funds would help reduce new cases of viral hepatitis through:
 - implementing and expanding infrastructure and programs
 - IDing people living with hepatitis and linking them to care and treatment
 - improving access to screening and treatment
 - prioritizing interventions among people who use drugs
 - improving surveillance and outbreak response
 - preventing mother-to-child transmission of viral hepatitis
 - improving prevention efforts through research and technical assistance



ADVOCACY EFFORTS – ELIMINATING OPIOID RELATED INFECTIOUS DISEASES



- Advocates worked to pass authorizing language last Congress
- Successfully included in the SUPPORT Act (H.R. 6)
 - Authorizes \$40M in funding for the CDC to provide resources to state and local governments and others to improve response to the infectious disease consequences of the opioid epidemic
 - Focus on prevention, education, surveillance, testing, linking individuals to substance use treatment, and linking individuals to care and treatment of infectious diseases most commonly associated by injection drug use
- \$5M included in last year's budget for similar efforts, community requesting a \$53M increase to match administration's \$58M in proposed funding
- One area where community, Congress, and the administration agree



INCREASED SUPPORT FOR SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAMS

- HHS Secretary Alex Azar on March 19th at the CDC National HIV Prevention Conference:
- “When the CDC determines that a community faces an increased risk of or surge in infectious disease transmission through drug use, they can offer funding and technical support [...] in establishing and running syringe service programs, or SSPs, which provide clean needles to people who use drugs.”
- “In addition to clean syringes, SSPs often provide connections to PrEP, substance abuse treatment, infectious disease testing, and vaccinations.”
- “Syringe services programs aren’t necessarily the first thing that comes to mind when you think about a Republican health secretary, but we’re in a battle between sickness and health. between life and death.”





ADVOCACY EFFORTS – ENDING THE HIV EPIDEMIC: A PLAN FOR AMERICA

- Administration recently announced a plan to eliminate new HIV infections in the country
 - 75% reduction in new HIV infections in 5 years and at least 90% reduction in 10 years
 - Target resources to the 48 highest burden counties, Washington, D.C., San Juan, Puerto Rico, and seven states with a substantial rural HIV burden
 - Includes \$25M in FY2020 for the Indian Health Service to screen for HIV and prevent and treat hepatitis C





HOW WE ADVOCATE

- Hill visits
 - Individual or group meetings with member of Congressperson's staff
 - Usually conducted on Capitol Hill in Congressperson's office
 - Range from :10 to an hour or more
- Community sign-on letters
 - Petition but with organizations as signers
 - Way to show there is "community" support for advocacy ask
 - May find previously unknown champions



HOW WE ADVOCATE

- Dear Colleague letters
 - Petition but with elected officials as signers
 - Way to show there is political support for advocacy ask
 - May find previously unknown champions
- Congressional Briefings
 - Event held on or near Capitol Hill
 - Chance to provide detailed info to Congressional staff as a group
 - Able to conduct presentations, panel conversations, etc.





HOW WE ADVOCATE

- Media
 - Building relationships with reporters to become a resource on a specific topic
 - Send out press releases and invite reporters to briefings and other community events
 - Write letters to the editor or op-eds
- Coalitions
 - Multiple organizations coming together to form a single entity
 - Can be within the same “community” or across numerous “communities”
 - Focused on specific advocacy area, or more general idea





HOW WE ADVOCATE

- Social Media
 - Important way to advocate given the large audience
 - Free!
 - Replacing websites as the first place some people go when looking up issues or organizations
- Grassroots
 - Connecting together advocates, people living with hepatitis, and others impacted by hepatitis
 - Important voices that must be included because “nothing about us without us”
 - What is happening on the ground in communities and states should drive the national conversation



HOW WE ADVOCATE

- Hep Caucus
 - Group of House members who have joined together to form a group focused on hepatitis issues
 - Leads the Dear Colleague letter in the House
 - Assists in setting up and promoting briefings on the Hill

116th CONGRESS CO-CHAIRS:



**Rep. Grace
Meng
(NY-6)**



**Rep. Hank
Johnson
(GA-4)**





Questions?

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