



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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MDHHS announces initiative to eliminate hepatitis C in Michigan on World Hepatitis Day

LANSING, Mich. – In recognition of World Hepatitis Day, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is launching the We Treat Hep C Initiative to take important steps towards eliminating hepatitis C in Michigan. This initiative is designed to bring down the cost of hepatitis C medication for Medicaid and the Michigan Department of Corrections.

Organizations around the world, including the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, commemorate World Hepatitis Day on July 28 to raise awareness about viral hepatitis. Viral hepatitis – a group of infectious diseases known as hepatitis A, B, C, D and E – affects millions of people worldwide, causing both acute and chronic liver disease, and can be fatal.

Hepatitis C (HCV) is a viral infection that causes liver inflammation, sometimes leading to serious liver damage. The hepatitis C virus spreads through contaminated blood. Approximately 115,000 people in Michigan are known to have HCV, though when taking undiagnosed persons into account that number may be as high as 200,000. In recent years, Direct-Acting Antivirals (DAA) were developed to treat HCV. This oral medication can cure the disease when taken every day for two to six months. With success rates of more than 90 percent, these drugs have the potential to virtually eliminate the disease.

Over the past several years, MDHHS has covered the cost of hepatitis C medications for thousands of Medicaid and Healthy Michigan Plan (HMP) beneficiaries, and MDOC has covered the cost of these medications for thousands of incarcerated individuals. However, the high prices associated with these drugs have strained program budgets.

In the coming weeks MDHHS will announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for drug manufacturers of DAAs to provide a significant discount to these programs. In return for this discount, the product will be the preferred DAA for Medicaid and MDOC, with minimal prior authorization requirements. The RFP will be posted on the State of Michigan Vendor Self Service System, found at Michigan.gov/vsslogin.

“MDHHS is committed to working with clinicians throughout the state to ensure that persons impacted by HCV can access these lifesaving medications wherever they live,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health at MDHHS. “We endeavor to achieve a future where HCV is no longer a threat to the health of Michiganders.”

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In addition, MDHHS has partnered with the Michigan Public Health Institute to engage stakeholders and community partners on testing, linkage to care and treatment of HCV. Testing and treatment capacity for HCV are highly dependent on engaging, training and eliminating barriers within the clinical community.

For more information, visit Michigan.gov/Hepatitis.

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