



Action Plan for the Prevention, Care, and Treatment of Viral Hepatitis Updated 2014–2016

Viral Hepatitis: The Facts

- There are approximately 3.5–5.3 million Americans living with viral hepatitis, and most of them do not know that they are infected.
- Viral hepatitis can persist undetected for many years before manifesting as chronic liver disease, cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), or even liver cancer.
- Viral hepatitis is a leading infectious cause of death, claiming the lives of 12,000–18,000 Americans each year.
- In 2007, annual deaths in the United States due to viral hepatitis outpaced deaths due to HIV for the first time.
- A safe and effective vaccine can prevent hepatitis A and B infection.
- Effective treatments are available for hepatitis B and C. Advances in hepatitis C treatments offer simpler dosing, shorter treatment durations, fewer side effects, and, most importantly, higher cure rates which eliminate the virus from the body and prevent liver damage, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer.

Vital Roles for Both Federal and Nonfederal Stakeholders

The updated Viral Hepatitis Action Plan underscores that its national goals cannot be achieved through federal action alone.

Active involvement of and innovation by a broad mix of nonfederal stakeholders from various sectors, both public and private, are essential.

The plan provides a framework and focus around which all key stakeholders can engage to strengthen the nation's response to viral hepatitis and seeks to leverage opportunities to improve the coordination of viral hepatitis activities across all sectors.



ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES

The updated plan organizes more than 150 actions around the following six priority areas:

- 1:** Educating Providers and Communities to Reduce Viral Hepatitis-Related Health Disparities
Confront viral hepatitis by breaking the silence.
- 2:** Improving Testing, Care, and Treatment to Prevent Liver Disease and Cancer
Take full advantage of existing tools.
- 3:** Strengthening Surveillance to Detect Viral Hepatitis Transmission and Disease
Collect accurate and timely information to get the job done.
- 4:** Eliminating Transmission of Vaccine-Preventable Viral Hepatitis
Take full advantage of vaccines that can prevent hepatitis A and B.
- 5:** Reducing Viral Hepatitis Caused by Drug Use
Stop the spread of viral hepatitis associated with drug use.
- 6:** Protecting Patients and Workers from Health Care-Associated Viral Hepatitis
Quality health care is safe health care.

Background

Building on the success of the nation's first comprehensive cross-agency action plan, released in 2011, *Combating the Silent Epidemic of Viral Hepatitis: Action Plan for the Prevention, Care, & Treatment of Viral Hepatitis*, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Justice (DOJ), and Veterans Affairs (VA) released a 3-year update of the plan in April 2014.

The updated Action Plan seeks to harness

- Promising new developments in treatments for hepatitis C;
- New recommendations for health care providers regarding screening for hepatitis C;
- Mounting public awareness of and concern about viral hepatitis; and
- The expansion of access to viral hepatitis prevention, diagnosis, care, and treatment offered by the Affordable Care Act.

Goals

The updated Action Plan continues the pursuit of four overarching national goals:

- Increase the proportion of persons who are aware of their HBV infection from 33% to 66%.
- Increase the proportion of persons who are aware of their HCV infection from 45% to 66%.
- Reduce the number of new cases of HCV infection by 25%.
- Eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HBV.

In addition to featuring actions for both federal and nonfederal stakeholders that will help achieve these goals, the updated Viral Hepatitis Action Plan introduces several progress measures selected to aid in monitoring and assessing the results of its implementation. These include core measures of progress toward the Action Plan's four overarching goals as well as three additional indicators, two related to viral hepatitis-related mortality and one related to hepatitis B vaccination coverage among health care workers.



“Viral hepatitis is a silent epidemic, and we can only defeat it if we break that silence. Now is the time to learn the risk factors for hepatitis; talk to family, friends, and neighbors who may be at risk; and to speak with health care providers about strategies for staying healthy.... [L]et each of us lend our support to those living with hepatitis and do our part to bring this epidemic to an end.”

***—President Barack Obama
World Hepatitis Day Proclamation
July 26, 2013***

***Successfully combating viral hepatitis across the United States requires a multifaceted approach that includes federal and nonfederal stakeholders and communities at large. Please join us in our efforts to continue to combat the silent epidemic of viral hepatitis!
To read the Action Plan and learn more, visit www.aids.gov/hepatitis.***
