

HEPATITIS C:

MORE DEADLY FOR AMERICAN INDIANS THAN ANY OTHER ETHNIC GROUP

Among all racial and ethnic groups, American Indians have the highest rate of hepatitis C infection, as well as the highest hepatitis C-related mortality rates. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that the number of Americans with hepatitis C increased within several ethnic groups from 2011-2012, American Indians experienced the highest increase (86.2 percent), compared to 36 percent among Caucasians and nearly 24 percent among Latinos.

American Indians were also the only ethnic group with more than 0.5 cases of hepatitis C per 100,000 of the general population for the years 2002-2010, and are twice as likely to have hepatitis C as Caucasian Americans.

HEPATITIS C IS BOTH MORE COMMON & MORE DEADLY AMONG AMERICAN INDIANS THAN ANY OTHER AMERICAN ETHNIC OR RACIAL GROUP.

A DEADLY THREAT TO AMERICAN INDIANS

Not only do American Indians have the highest rate of hepatitis C, they are also the most likely ethnic group to die as a result of it. According to CDC data for the year 2011, the hepatitis C mortality rate per 100,000 people was 4 for Caucasians and 10.6 for American Indians.

THE NEED FOR INCREASED SCREENING & AWARENESS

Hepatitis C screening for at-risk patients is critical to improve awareness, connect patients with treatment, and prevent new infections. Considering up to 75 percent of individuals living with hepatitis C are unaware they even have the illness, testing and early detection is invaluable, especially for American Indians who have a stronger likelihood of infection.

All Americans need to hear the message that hepatitis C, while rampant, is preventable, often treatable, and detected through a simple diagnostic test. Screening for hepatitis C is the first step to connect infected individuals with treatment and to prevent the disease from spreading. Empowering American Indians and other at-risk individuals to know their hepatitis C status is the first step in the fight against this silent killer.

HEPATITIS C FACTS

- 3.2 million Americans are estimated to be living with hepatitis C – the leading cause of catastrophic liver damage (cirrhosis), liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplants.
- Up to 75 percent of individuals living with hepatitis C do not realize they are infected because the disease often takes years, or even decades, to cause symptoms.
- While the virus remains undetected, causing potentially life-threatening liver damage, individuals can unknowingly transmit the disease to others.
- Hepatitis C is most prevalent among baby boomers, who are five times more likely to be infected. In fact, 75 percent of Americans living with hepatitis C were born between 1945 and 1965.
- Hepatitis C disproportionately affects minority Americans. Prevalence of the virus is 3 percent among African Americans and 2.6 percent among Latinos, compared to 1.5 percent of the general population. Prevalence is highest among American Indians.
- Unless current trends are reversed, the CDC predicts that deaths due to the virus will double or even triple in the next 20 years.

Source: The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention



HEPATITIS FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

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CLOSING THE GAP ON RACIAL & ETHNIC HEPATITIS DISPARITIES

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