



Hepatitis C Virus Initiative from MDHHS

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is launching a campaign aimed at providing timely screening and treatment of Hepatitis C.

For more information about this initiative, please see the attached press release from MDHHS.



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ELIZABETH HERTEL
DIRECTOR

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CONTACT: Chelsea Wuth
517-241-2112
WuthC@michigan.gov

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services launches We Treat Hep C Campaign aimed at providing timely screening and treatment of Hepatitis C

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is working to eliminate Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) as a health threat to Michiganders through the [We Treat Hep C](#) Initiative and with the release of the [state plan](#) on eliminating Hepatitis C.

HCV is spread through contact with blood from an infected person. Most people exposed to the virus will develop chronic HCV infection, which causes damage to the liver and can lead to serious, even life-threatening health problems like cirrhosis and liver cancer. There is no vaccine for HCV, but there are medications that can cure HCV infection in eight to 12 weeks. Eliminating HCV from the blood prevents an individual from being able to transmit HCV to others.

National estimates suggest that between 1% and 2% of the population may be impacted by HCV and that as many as 50% are unaware they are carrying the virus. At least 115,000 Michiganders are known to be infected with HCV, but the number of infected persons could be as high as 200,000. HCV is easily diagnosed with a simple blood test. However, because the infection can be symptom-free for many years, persons carrying the virus are often not tested and opportunities to cure infection early are missed.

HCV is curable. There are proven clinical tools to diagnose HCV infection and medications to eradicate the virus for those who are impacted, preventing the negative health outcomes. The We Treat Hep C Initiative will help make those tools accessible to all Michiganders. Part of the We Treat Hep C initiative is to educate and inform clinicians about resources available to test and treat patients for HCV.

“It is crucial that all Michiganders receive a Hepatitis C Virus screening at least one time in their life, and more frequently if they are in an at-risk category,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health at MDHHS. “HCV is curable, and we are committed to making both testing and treatment accessible for all residents in need.”

A core component of Michigan’s HCV elimination strategy is to promote universal HCV testing for all adults. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all adults ages 18 and older should be tested for HCV at least once in a lifetime, and all women should be tested for HCV during each pregnancy. MDHHS encourages Michiganders to talk to their doctors about being tested.

Additionally, the We Treat Hep C Initiative aims to make treatment more accessible by removing barriers to prescribing. MDHHS has entered into an agreement with AbbVie, the manufacturer of the HCV Direct-Acting Antiviral MAVYRET[®], to make treatment available to all Medicaid and Healthy Michigan Plan beneficiaries. Starting April 1, Michigan Medicaid is removing prior authorization requirements for the preferred HCV medication, MAVYRET.

MAVYRET is an oral prescription medication used to treat adults and children ages 12 and older with chronic HCV genotypes 1-6. In most cases, the treatment regimen is three pills taken once daily for eight weeks. With the removal of prior authorization requirements on MAVYRET, Medicaid and HMP beneficiaries with HCV will be able to receive a prescription from their health care provider and start treatment immediately after receiving their diagnosis.

The success of the We Treat Hep C Initiative will be directly tied to the state's clinical community treating patients impacted by HCV. MDHHS is partnering with Wayne State University's Midwest AIDS Training and Education Center to develop curricula and trainings for interested clinicians. MDHHS is also contracting with Henry Ford Health System to maintain an HCV clinical consulting line that will help provide peer-to-peer advice to clinicians in the process of evaluating and treating their patients for HCV (313-575-0332, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or [online](#)).

Recent medical advancements in HCV treatment means that no one should have to live with or die from the disease. HCV testing and treatment is simple and We Treat Hep C aims to make treatment accessible for all Michiganders. For more information, visit [the We Treat Hep C webpage](#).

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