

Hepatitis C Elimination Progress Report: New York City Program and Policy Updates

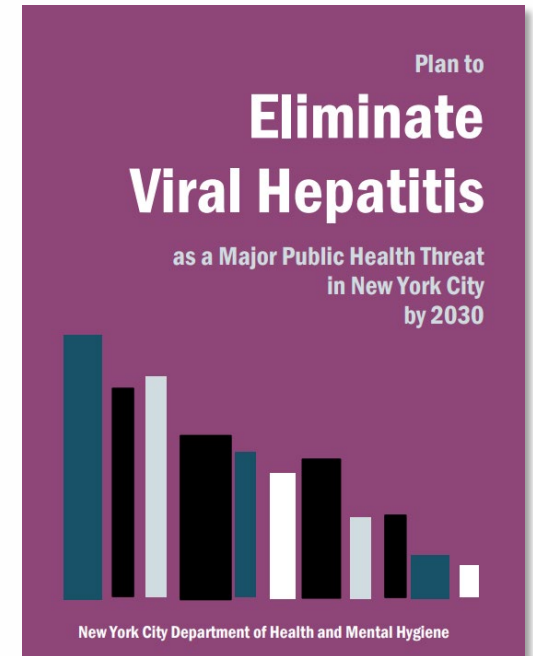
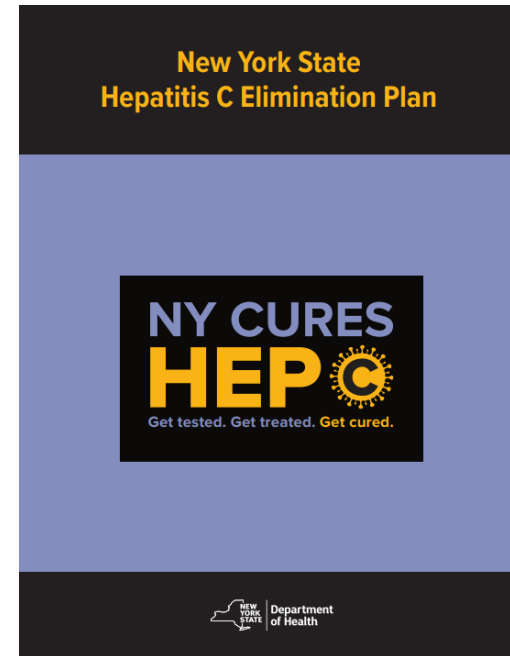
New York State Hepatitis C Elimination Annual Progress Report
May 15, 2024

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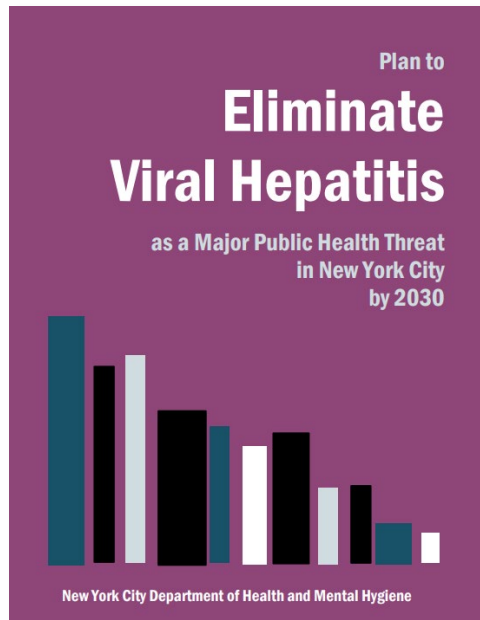
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New York City and New York State Working to Eliminate Hepatitis C

- In 2021, the New York State Department of Health issued the **New York State Hepatitis C Elimination Plan**.
- In 2021, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) issued the **Plan to Eliminate Viral Hepatitis as a Major Public Health Threat in New York City by 2030 (NYC Hepatitis Elimination Plan)**.



NYC Hepatitis Elimination Plan: Development



The product of a year-long community planning process, the **NYC Hepatitis Elimination Plan** included input from:

- Community stakeholders,
- Subject matter experts,
- People with lived experience,
- Researchers,
- Clinicians,
- Patient and peer navigators, and
- Community-based organizations.

NYC Hepatitis Elimination Plan: Goals

- Reduce new chronic hepatitis C infections among people in New York City by 90% by 2030.
- Reduce premature deaths among people with chronic hepatitis B and C in New York City by 65% by 2030; and improve the health of people with hepatitis B and C in New York City.
- Reduce health inequities related to viral hepatitis infection among people in New York City.

NYC Hepatitis Elimination Plan: Hepatitis B and C Strategies

Types of Strategies:

- Awareness, education, and prevention
- Testing and linkage to care
- Care and treatment
- Surveillance data

Strategies include proposals for:

- Systems and policy changes
- Enhanced clinical infrastructure
- Increased training and community outreach
- Stigma-free, culturally and linguistically responsive care

NYC Hepatitis Elimination Plan: Progress Towards Elimination 2022-2023

Clinical Education Achievements

Strategy:

- Engage more primary care providers and addiction medicine providers to attend in-depth training on trauma-informed, stigma-free, and harm reduction-oriented hepatitis C care.

Status:

- NYC Health Department partners with the Empire Liver Foundation to deliver clinical education on the importance of initiating hepatitis C treatment for all people diagnosed with hepatitis C, including people who use drugs and people with HIV.
- Tailored programs were delivered to substance use treatment programs including START, Elev8, and ACI.

Local Advocacy Achievements

Strategies:

- Employ more peer educators to raise awareness about hepatitis C prevention and the availability of a cure in their respective communities.
- Support increased funding for patient navigation programs (such as Check Hep C) for people with hepatitis C.

Status:

- The Hep Free NYC Advocacy Committee developed materials and trainings to support organizations advocating for increased City funding for patient and peer navigation programs.
- Hep Free NYC led a New York City Council educational briefing on viral hepatitis.
- Community members testified about the importance of City funding for the Viral Hepatitis Initiative at New York City Council budget hearings.

Surveillance Data Achievements

Strategy:

- Amend the New York City Health Code to require laboratories to report negative hepatitis C antibody results to enable the NYC Health Department to develop and share citywide and facility-specific screening rates and identify acute infections.

Status:

- In December 2023, the New York City Board of Health finalized these amendments and the new reporting requirements became effective in January 2024.
- In February 2024, the NYC Health Department issued a Dear Colleague letter to laboratory directors on these and related changes to reporting requirements.

NYC Hepatitis Elimination Plan: Implementation

Working with National Partners

Strategy:

- Join national stakeholder groups in advocating for alternative hepatitis C testing technologies, such as the point-of-care RNA test.

Status:

- The NYC Health Department joined national advocacy efforts to promote the Biden-Harris administration's National Hepatitis C Elimination Program proposal, which includes a plan to develop alternative hepatitis C testing strategies and a point-of-care RNA test.

Working with the New York State Department of Health

Medicaid and Insurance Reforms:

- Advocate for Medicaid and other health insurance reimbursement for patient navigation and care coordination services for people with hepatitis C.
- Advocate to eliminate all remaining hepatitis C treatment prior authorization requirements to facilitate rapid linkage to care and treatment starts, and to ensure that all insurance providers do not impose barriers to care, such as prohibiting treatment for hepatitis C reinfection.

Status:

- Effective January 2024, New York State Medicaid expanded community health worker benefits for pregnant people up to 12 months after pregnancy ends.
- In February 2024, the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable and Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation awarded New York State an A+ grade in its assessment of hepatitis C treatment access for Medicaid enrollees.

Hepatitis C Community Navigation Programs

The New York City Council provides funding for patient and peer navigation at community-based organizations, health centers, and syringe exchange programs.



**Check Hep C Patient
Navigation Program
(est. 2012)**

12 health centers and hospitals support full-time patient navigators to coordinate care for people with chronic hepatitis C to get cured.



**Hep C Peer Navigation at
Syringe Exchange Programs
(est. 2014)**

13 harm reduction programs support part-time peers or full-time patient navigators to conduct outreach, health education, and coordinate access to harm reduction and hepatitis C testing and treatment.

Clinical and Non-Clinical Educational Opportunities



Harm Reduction Coalition

- Offers training and monthly technical assistance to syringe service program staff working on hepatitis C



Empire Liver Foundation

- Provides training to clinical providers in form of grand rounds, training series, special topic sessions, and preceptorships

HCMSG



Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group

- Developed incentivized, online interactive “Hepatitis C Basics” module in 2020

Hep Free NYC

- Collaborate with Hep Free NYC's Hep B Coalition and Hep C Task Force and other community stakeholders
- Advocate for policies and programs to expand access to care for people affected by chronic hepatitis B and C
- Share best practices and resources to support NYC Hepatitis Elimination Plan goals



Hep Free NYC Committees

Hep Free NYC committees have impact and reach into specific populations:

- Advocacy Committee
- Injection Drug User Health Alliance
- Coalition against Hepatitis in People of African Origin (CHIPO) Committee
- South Asian Hepatitis Initiative

The NYC Health Department continues to work with committees to support educational programs and screening events.



Looking Ahead

The NYC Health Department will continue to:

- Seek additional national, state, and local funding to expand work to support existing partnerships;
- Expand partnerships and engage new organizations;
- Identify “Elimination Champions” and collect best practices and case studies;
- Develop work groups to work on specific strategies;
- Bring together subject matter experts to support implementation of plan; and
- Collaborate with New York State Department of Health and learn from other states and municipalities.

Questions?

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