

Hepatitis C Screening

Introduction

HCV infection is a major public health problem causing substantial morbidity and mortality, including cirrhosis and liver cancer. It is responsible for more deaths in the United States than all 60 reportable infectious diseases combined, including HIV and TB. Nationally, three out of four people living with HCV are persons born between 1945 and 1965. Most new infections occur because of injection drug use (IDU). In recent years, there has been an increase in HCV among young people who inject drugs living in rural areas of the country. This increase is tied to the opioid epidemic. Many people with HCV are unaware they are infected. The approval of direct acting antiviral therapies makes it possible to eliminate HCV. However, we know it will take more than highly effective treatments to eliminate HCV as a public health problem. Gaps along the HCV care cascade must be addressed to ensure: new cases of HCV are prevented; everyone with HCV knows their status; persons living with HCV receive treatment; and social determinants of health, including stigma and discrimination, are addressed. In addition, surveillance systems must be strengthened at the state and local levels.

Changes to Public Health Law: Hepatitis C Screening (Effective May 2024)

- Individuals aged eighteen and older (or younger than eighteen if there is evidence or indication of risk activity) shall be offered a hepatitis c screening test.
 - If the individual accepts the test and if the test is reactive, an HCV RNA test must be performed on the same specimen, or a second specimen collected at the same time as the initial HCV screening test specimen must be used to confirm diagnosis of current infection.
 - The health care provider shall either offer all persons with a detectable HCV RNA test follow-up HCV health care and treatment or refer the individual to a health care provider who can provide follow-up HCV health care and treatment.
- **Exemptions:**
 - the individual is being treated for a life-threatening emergency;
 - the individual has previously been offered or has been the subject of a hepatitis C screening test (except that a test shall be offered if otherwise indicated); or
 - the individual lacks capacity to consent to a hepatitis C screening test.

Practitioners shall order a hepatitis C virus (HCV) screening test for pregnant persons.

- If the test is reactive, an HCV RNA test must be performed on the same specimen, or a second specimen collected at the same time as the initial HCV screening test specimen must be used to confirm diagnosis of current infection.
- The health care provider shall either offer all persons with a detectable HCV RNA test follow up HCV health care and treatment or refer the individual to a health care provider who can provide follow-up HCV health care and treatment.

NYS Medicaid Fee-for-Service Hepatitis C Screening. Effective April 2023.

Hepatitis C Screening

- Eliminating Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) by Implementing Universal Screening—\$1.0M in FY24; \$1.0M in FY25.
- Individuals aged eighteen and older (or younger than eighteen if there is evidence or indication of risk activity) shall be offered a hepatitis C screening test.
- Practitioners shall order a hepatitis C virus (HCV) screening test for pregnant persons.

Additional Resources

New York State Hepatitis C Elimination

[Hepatitis C \(ny.gov\)](https://www.ny.gov/hcv)

The NYC Health Department released the [Plan to Eliminate Viral Hepatitis as a Major Public Health Threat in New York City by 2030 \(Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan\)](#) (PDF), a set of strategies to reduce the number of hepatitis C infections, improve the health of people with hepatitis B and C, and reduce health inequities related to viral hepatitis infection in New York City.

Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan Goals

- Reduce new Hep C infections among people in NYC by 90% by 2030.
- Reduce premature deaths among people with chronic Hep B and chronic Hep C in NYC by 65% by 2030. Improve the health of people with Hep B and C in NYC.
- Reduce health inequities related to viral hepatitis infection among people in NYC.