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# Exploring Vital Roles and Opportunities to Break the Silence

# STAKEHOLDERS' WORKBOOK

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CONTINUING TO COMBAT THE SILENT EPIDEMIC OF VIRAL HEPATITIS

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## **Action Plan for the Prevention, Care, and Treatment of Viral Hepatitis Updated 2014-2016**

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

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### Exploring Vital Roles and Opportunities for Stakeholders

#### 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. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in collaboration with the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Justice (DOJ), and Veterans Affairs (VA) developed and released a 3-year update of that plan in April 2014.

The updated Action Plan continues to pursue its four overarching national goals by 2020:

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

The updated plan details more than 150 actions organized around six priority areas that agencies and offices from across the four federal departments will pursue between 2014 and 2016 to achieve these goals.

The updated Viral Hepatitis Action Plan, or Action Plan, underscores that its national goals cannot be achieved through federal action alone. Active involvement, and innovation of a broad mix of stakeholders from various sectors, both public and private, is essential. Stakeholders were strongly supportive of the update of the Action Plan and played a critical role in providing input into the process. All agreed that the updated plan should explicitly embrace the vital contributions of various stakeholders in achieving the national goals for the prevention, diagnosis, care, and treatment of viral hepatitis in the United States. As a result, the updated document contains an initial list of opportunities that stakeholders from various sectors can undertake to complement the federal efforts detailed in the plan.

## Detailing Opportunities for Stakeholders

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. This workbook was created to assist you in identifying additional innovative and actionable (specific and detailed) opportunities to advance each of the Action Plan's six priority areas. These may be steps by individual organizations, actions that engage a particular stakeholder's networks, or an entire state or sector in actions that complement, amplify, or extend the actions detailed in the plan to which the federal partners have committed. Working together, various stakeholders can improve our nation's response to viral hepatitis and achieve the plan's lifesaving goals.

### **Instructions**

Stakeholder involvement is essential to ensuring the overall success of the Action Plan. We encourage you and your colleagues to create opportunities to talk through ideas, potential activities, challenges, tools, resources, and partnerships related to each priority area.

To facilitate discussion, each priority area section includes a brief, simple summary, the goals from the Action Plan, sample opportunities for stakeholders, and initial discussion questions based on the goals. Examples of opportunities are described for individuals, health professionals and professional organizations, and community-based, patient, and advocacy groups. For each question, please identify the following:

- Specific actions that you, your organization, or other organizations can take to help implement the Action Plan;
- Specific partners that should be engaged; and
- Key messages and/or existing, effective messages.

At the end of the workbook, we have included a sample hepatitis planning sheet to further support effective collaboration. The sample planning sheet provides an opportunity to brainstorm time frames and measures for progress for each activity.

Through implementation of the Action Plan, we have found that partnership and collaboration have been the most effective strategies to address viral hepatitis. We recommend reaching out to a broad range of potential partners in the public and private sectors including: departments of health (state and local), academic researchers and programs, community organizations of all kinds, advocates, professional associations, healthcare provider groups, pharmaceutical and diagnostics companies, hospitals, businesses, workforce wellness programs, corrections programs, and others.

The ideas generated from this workbook can be shared with colleagues within organizations, workgroups or coalitions, community planning groups, and other stakeholders to identify priorities and next steps to help guide your work. The action steps can be used in a variety of ways such as program planning, coalition building, or even as the template for an Action Plan of your own.



## Priority Area 1: Educating Providers and Communities to Reduce Viral Hepatitis-related Health Disparities

### **Confront viral hepatitis by breaking the silence.**

*For too long, there has been silence on viral hepatitis. In order to achieve the goals of the Viral Hepatitis Action Plan, we must work to break this deadly silence on viral hepatitis both among health care providers, as well as other allies working with heavily affected populations, while addressing low levels of awareness of viral hepatitis in the general public.*

**GOAL 1.1** Build a U.S. health care workforce prepared to prevent and diagnose viral hepatitis and provide care and treatment to infected persons.

**GOAL 1.2** Decrease health disparities by educating communities about the benefits of viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment.

## Examples of Opportunities for Stakeholders

### *Individuals can:*

- Take the CDC Viral Hepatitis Risk Assessment and share the Assessment with family, friends, colleagues, and community members.
- Ask health care providers if testing and/or vaccination is recommended.
- Learn more about viral hepatitis and get tested by attending events on National Hepatitis Testing Day (May 19) and World Hepatitis Day (July 28).

### *Medical, nursing, public health and other health professionals and professional organizations, associations, schools and training programs can:*

- Help disseminate professional training tools and materials.
- Encourage training of peers and colleagues with free CMEs (such as at [www.hepwebstudy.org](http://www.hepwebstudy.org).)
- Use CDC's [online risk assessment](#) to determine if clients need hepatitis vaccination or testing.
- Order CDC's posters or download educational fact sheets for use with patients.

### *Community-based, patient, and advocacy groups can:*

- Use CDC's hepatitis campaign materials to help spread the word about the importance of getting tested for viral hepatitis.
- Hold regular hepatitis testing events, and participate in National Testing Day on May 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Continue to build coalitions to expand the ability to reach populations most impacted by viral hepatitis.

**Priority Area 1**

Educating Providers and Communities to Reduce Viral Hepatitis-related Health Disparities

***Confront viral hepatitis by breaking the silence.***

What types of training can your organization do and/or promote? What is the most effective format and who are your target audiences?

Related Goal: Build a U.S. health care workforce prepared to prevent and diagnose viral hepatitis and provide care and treatment to infected persons (Goal 1.1).

What activities can you conduct to increase community awareness about health disparities in viral hepatitis?

Related Goal: Decrease health disparities by educating communities about the benefits of viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment (Goal 1.2).

Information, partners, materials, or tools that would be helpful in Priority Area 1 efforts include:



## Priority Area 2: Improving Testing, Care, and Treatment to Prevent Liver Disease and Cancer

### *Take full advantage of existing tools.*

*Providers at every level in the health care system can play a critical role in meeting the needs of the millions of people at risk for and living with viral hepatitis. However, not all providers are prepared to address these needs and missed opportunities to prevent, diagnose, treat, and care for persons with viral hepatitis have resulted in preventable morbidity and mortality. In order to achieve the goals of the Viral Hepatitis Action Plan, we must fully utilize existing training, clinical care tools and policies, address unmet needs, and develop model programs to expand health care provider capacity to provide high-quality viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment in primary care and other settings.*

**GOAL 2.1** Identify persons infected with viral hepatitis early in the course of their disease.

**GOAL 2.2** Link and refer persons infected with viral hepatitis to care and treatment.

**GOAL 2.3** Improve access to and quality of care and treatment for persons infected with viral hepatitis.

**GOAL 2.4** Advance research to facilitate viral hepatitis prevention and enhance care and treatment for infected persons.

## Opportunities for Stakeholders

### *Individuals can:*

- Learn about and promote the CDC Viral Hepatitis Risk Assessment and discuss the resultant recommendations with providers.
- Learn about current antiviral therapies and share the information with chronically infected friends and family members.

### *Medical, nursing, public health and other health professionals and professional organizations, associations, schools and training programs can:*

- Identify opportunities to increase provider awareness and utilize existing training, tools, and model programs.
- Adopt viral hepatitis testing and care recommendations in clinical settings.
- Ensure follow up and linkage to care when conducting viral hepatitis testing.

### *Community-based, patient and advocacy groups can:*

- Develop culturally and linguistically relevant health literacy tools and materials for populations at risk for hepatitis B and C.
- Mobilize communities about the silent epidemic of viral hepatitis and the threats of an unaddressed epidemic.

**Priority Area 2**

**Improving Testing, Care, and Treatment to Prevent Liver Disease and Cancer**

***Take full advantage of existing tools.***

What are the best ways to identify persons with chronic viral hepatitis who do not know they are infected? What can your organization do to promote this?

Related Goal: Identify persons infected with viral hepatitis early in the course of their disease (Goal 2.1).

How can your organization effectively link and refer persons diagnosed with viral hepatitis to care and treatment?

Related Goal: Link and refer persons infected with viral hepatitis to care and treatment (Goal 2.2).

What activities/strategies could improve access to and quality of care and treatment for persons infected with viral hepatitis? Are there specific activities/strategies for special populations and/or the communities you serve?

Related Goal: Improve access to and quality of care and treatment for persons infected with viral hepatitis (Goal 2.3).

Are there ways you can work with researchers to come up with strategies to improve viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment?

Related Goal: Advance research to facilitate viral hepatitis prevention and enhance care and treatment for infected persons (Goal 2.4).

Information, partners, materials or tools that would be helpful in Priority Area 2 efforts include:

What activities can your organization or other nonfederal partners do to decrease health disparities in viral hepatitis?

Information, materials or tools that would be helpful to have in order to this include:



### Priority Area 3:

## Strengthening Surveillance to Detect Viral Hepatitis Transmission and Disease

**Collect accurate and timely information to get the job done.**

*Surveillance and other health data are necessary to shape and direct effective viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment efforts. Data can also play an important role in making decisions on how resources can best be allocated to meet the needs of populations at risk for or infected with HBV or HCV. In order to achieve the goals of the Viral Hepatitis Action Plan, partners across various sectors must build new relationships, identify opportunities to utilize HIT, and maximize our use of available data for informed decision-making.*

**GOAL 3.1** Monitor viral hepatitis-associated health disparities, transmission, and disease.

**GOAL 3.2** Monitor provision and impact of viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment services.

**GOAL 3.3** Develop and implement new technologies and laboratory procedures to improve viral hepatitis surveillance.

### Opportunities for Stakeholders

*Medical, nursing, and other medical professionals can:*

- Report viral hepatitis in accordance with public health and communicable disease requirements.
- Collaborate with public health authorities to improve surveillance data completeness and quality.
- Use electronic health record technology to assess and evaluate the impact of viral hepatitis and related services.
- Establish patient registries to evaluate and improve patient management and clinical processes.

*Public health, research, and other health professionals and professional organizations, associations, schools and training programs can:*

- Develop more detailed information about population-specific health disparities in viral hepatitis prevention, diagnosis, care, and treatment.
- Contribute to research and the development of improved testing procedures and technologies.
- Support state surveillance projects and epidemiological investigations to help understand the characteristics and needs of the emerging hepatitis C epidemic among young people who inject drugs.

*Community-based, patient and advocacy groups can:*

- Promote and support research on determining the prevalence of hepatitis among homeless and other at-risk individuals and families.
- Develop plain-language documents based on research and disseminate to communities.

**Priority Area 3**

**Strengthening Surveillance to Detect Viral Hepatitis Transmission and Disease**  
***Collect accurate and timely information to get the job done.***

How can your program contribute to the monitoring of viral hepatitis-associated health disparities?

Related Goal: Monitor viral hepatitis-associated health disparities, transmission, and disease (Goal 3.1).

What opportunities are there for your organization to monitor or provide information about the provision and impact of viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment services?

Related Goal: Monitor provision and impact of viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment services (Goal 3.2) .

What new technologies or lab services would improve your ability to serve people living with or at risk for viral hepatitis?

Related Goal: Develop and implement new technologies and laboratory procedures to improve viral hepatitis surveillance (Goal 3.3).

Information, partners, materials or tools that would be helpful in Priority Area 3 efforts include:



## Priority Area 4:

# Eliminating Transmission of Vaccine-Preventable Viral Hepatitis

**Take full advantage of vaccines that can prevent hepatitis A and B.**

*Focused efforts to increase the number of persons who receive hepatitis A and B vaccination will lead to further reductions in the burden of hepatitis A and B in the United States and to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B.*

**GOAL 4.1** Eliminate mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B.

**GOAL 4.2** Achieve universal hepatitis A and B vaccination for vulnerable adults and youth.

**GOAL 4.3** Design and test new or improved viral hepatitis vaccines, and determine the indications for their optimal use.

## Opportunities for Stakeholders

*Individuals can:*

- Ask health care providers if vaccination for HAV and/or HBV is recommended for their particular healthcare needs.
- Request a test for HBV if it's recommended by the CDC Viral Hepatitis Risk Assessment.

*Public health, research, and other health professionals and professional organizations, associations, schools and training programs can:*

- Conduct health care provider and consumer education on HBV screening for pregnant women and ensuring neonates receive a birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine.
- Ensure that institutional policies include HBV screening for expectant women and prompt administration of the birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine to infants.
- Complete the three-dose series and receive post-vaccination testing for infants born to HBsAg-positive women.
- Initiate or enhance vaccination in clinical settings serving priority populations.
- Invest in research on new or improved vaccines.

*Community-based, patient and advocacy groups can:*

- Disseminate federally developed recommendations, guidelines, and campaign materials to professional, institutional, consumer, and community networks.
- Collaborate with public health and community stakeholders to educate, screen, and vaccinate priority populations.
- Educate the public and health care providers about the preventive benefits and coverage provisions of the Affordable Care Act and their implications for improved hepatitis A and B vaccine coverage.

**Priority Area 4**

**Eliminating Transmission of Vaccine-Preventable Viral Hepatitis  
*Take full advantage of vaccines that can prevent hepatitis A and B.***

What activities can your organization undertake to raise awareness about and/or reduce perinatal hepatitis B?

Related Goal: Eliminate mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B (Goal 4.1).

How can your organization increase hepatitis A and B vaccination rates for vulnerable adults and youth? (May be different for different target audiences- AAPI, PWID, others)

Related Goal: Achieve universal hepatitis A and B vaccination for vulnerable adults and youth (Goal 4.2).

What can your organization do to support Hepatitis C vaccine development and/or preparedness at the community level?

Related Goal: Design and test new or improved viral hepatitis vaccines, and determine the indications for their optimal use. (Goal 4.3)

Information, partners, materials or tools that would be helpful in Priority Area 4 efforts include:



## Priority Area 5:

# Reducing Viral Hepatitis Associated with Drug Use

### **Stop the spread of viral hepatitis associated with drug use.**

*A broad cross-section of public- and private-sector partners is increasingly alarmed by the emergence of an epidemic of hepatitis C infection among young people who inject drugs, both male and female, primarily in rural and suburban settings, who started prescription opioid use before transitioning to heroin injection. There is an urgent need for research, surveillance, and prevention strategies that interrupt viral hepatitis transmission in order to curb rising incidence rates in young people and others who use and/or inject drugs.*

**GOAL 5.1** Ensure that persons who inject drugs have access to viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment services.

**GOAL 5.2** Develop and mobilize community resources to prevent viral hepatitis caused by injection drug use.

**GOAL 5.3** Expand access to and delivery of hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment services in correctional settings.

**GOAL 5.4** Advance research to improve prevention of viral hepatitis among persons who use drugs.

## Opportunities for Stakeholders

### *Individuals can:*

- Learn the risks of viral hepatitis associated with injection drug use and strategies to prevent transmission.
- Share accurate facts about viral hepatitis with friends, peers, and family members.

### *Public health, research, and other health professionals and professional organizations, associations, schools and training programs can:*

- Identify significant gaps in services, social supports and other needs of PWID at the community level.
- Promote the availability of training opportunities for providers and others who work closely with those at risk for initiating injection drug use, PWID, and people in correctional facilities.

### *Community-based, patient and advocacy groups can:*

- Advise in the development of training tools and curricula for working with PWID and other drug users.
- Address the needs of young people infected with and affected by HCV (since young PWID may not prioritize hepatitis C prevention, interventions will need to holistically address their other priorities, focusing on basic needs and age-appropriate health care and drug treatment, integrating HCV prevention interventions into these points of contact).
- Collaborate locally with partners from the addictions and recovery communities, researchers, public health authorities, syringe service programs, opioid substitution providers, and other allies to support increased viral hepatitis education and services for people who inject drugs.

**Priority Area 5**  
Reducing Viral Hepatitis Caused by Drug Use  
***Stop the spread of viral hepatitis associated with drug use.***

What steps can you/your organization take to ensure that persons who inject drugs have access to viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment information and services?

Related Goal: Ensure that persons who inject drugs have access to viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment services (Goal 5.1).

What can you/your organization do to develop and mobilize community resources to prevent viral hepatitis associated with drug use/PWID, especially among young drug users?

Related Goal: Develop and mobilize community resources to prevent viral hepatitis caused by injection drug use (Goal 5.2).

What roles can your organization play in expanding the provision of viral hepatitis information and access to and delivery of hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment services in correctional settings?

Related Goal: Expand access to and delivery of hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment services in correctional settings (Goal 5.3).

What are the opportunities for you/your organization to work with researchers and communities to develop/implement strategies to improve prevention of viral hepatitis among persons who use drugs?

Related Goal: Advance research to improve prevention of viral hepatitis among persons who use drugs (Goal 5.4).

Information, partners, materials or tools that would be helpful in Priority Area 5 efforts include:



## Priority Area 6:

# Protecting Patients From Health Care-Associated Viral Hepatitis

### *Quality health care is safe health care.*

*Neither patients nor providers should be at risk for acquiring HBV, HCV, or other bloodborne infections during health care encounters. Stakeholders in the Action Plan recognize that such health care-associated infections are an important public health and patient safety issue and are committed to better understanding the causes and further reducing the risk of their occurrence.*

**GOAL 6.1** Reduce transmission of viral hepatitis to patients resulting from misuse of medical devices and drugs.

**GOAL 6.2** Reduce transmission of viral hepatitis associated with blood, organs, and tissues.

**GOAL 6.3** Reduce occupational transmission of viral hepatitis.

**GOAL 6.4** Enhance understanding of the preventable causes of viral hepatitis transmission in health care settings.

## Opportunities for Stakeholders

### *Individuals can:*

- Ask health care providers if a new needle, new syringe, and a new vial will be used for procedures or injections.
- Ask health care providers how they prevent the spread of infections in their facilities.

### *Public health, research, and other health professionals and professional organizations, associations, schools and training programs can:*

- Ensure institutional infection control and prevention policies are updated, clearly communicated, and enforced.
- Update and conduct provider trainings in infection control.
- Invest in new technologies that reduce transmission of blood borne pathogens.
- Vaccinate all health care workers for hepatitis B.
- Implement measures to prevent opioid diversion.
- Develop new resources, tools, and technologies that reduce the likelihood of health care-associated disease transmission.
- Conduct research to identify transmission risks and guide the development of improved procedures, policies, and practices.

### *Community-based, patient and advocacy groups can:*

- Disseminate recommendations, guidelines, and campaign materials to professional and institutional networks.
- Report suspected health care-associated outbreaks and collaborate with public health investigation and research efforts.

**Priority Area 6**  
Protecting Patients and Workers From Health Care-Associated Viral Hepatitis  
*Quality health care is safe health care.*

How can you/your organization contribute to reducing the transmission of viral hepatitis to patients in medical settings and raise awareness about this issue?

Related Goal: Reduce transmission of viral hepatitis to patients resulting from misuse of medical devices and drugs (Goal 6.1).

What can your organization do to promote viral hepatitis testing and awareness among potential blood, organ, and tissue donors?

Related Goal: Reduce transmission of viral hepatitis associated with blood, organs, and tissues (Goal 6.2).

What opportunities do(es) you/your organization have to raise awareness about viral hepatitis prevention in health care and other occupational settings?

Related Goal: Reduce occupational transmission of viral hepatitis (Goal 6.3).

What activities/strategies can you/your organization promote or support to better understand the preventable causes of viral hepatitis transmission in health care settings?

Related Goal: Enhance understanding of the preventable causes of viral hepatitis transmission in health care settings (Goal 6.4).

Information, partners, materials or tools that would be helpful in Priority Area 6 include:

**Hepatitis Activity Planning Sheet:** *Please use the chart below to plan activities for your organization as they relate to Priority Areas 1-6.*

Priority Area \_\_:

GOAL	Proposed Activity	Lead Staff	Potential Partners	Initiation Date	Anticipated Completion Date	Possible Measures
GOAL __	[Describe activity]	[Add staff names]	[Add partners list]	mm/dd/yy	mm/dd/yy	[Describe measure]
GOAL __	[Describe activity]	[Add staff names]	[Add partners list]	mm/dd/yy	mm/dd/yy	[Describe measure]
GOAL __	[Describe activity]	[Add staff names]	[Add partners list]	mm/dd/yy	mm/dd/yy	[Describe measure]
GOAL __	[Describe activity]	[Add staff names]	[Add partners list]	mm/dd/yy	mm/dd/yy	[Describe measure]
GOAL __	[Describe activity]	[Add staff names]	[Add partners list]	mm/dd/yy	mm/dd/yy	[Describe measure]

Make additional copies of this table as needed for activities in each Priority Area. 16



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