Giving the Primary Healthcare Providers of Baltimore City What They Need to Provide or Access Treatment Services for HCV Positive Individuals

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Hepatitis C

- Infection of the liver caused by the hepatitis C virus
- Transmitted when blood from a HCV-infected person enters the body of a non-infected individual
- Most common mode of transmission of HCV is currently through needle sharing
Monitor

- 8-10 thousand people die in the US from HCV related causes
- Nearly 100,000 people in Maryland are currently infected
- 66,000 are unaware of their infection status
Diagnose & Investigate

- Difficulty in recognizing clinical presentation
- Lack of accessible healthcare for certain individuals
- Lack of resources for HCV confirmation in testing
- Insufficient staffing in local health departments
- Variations between health departments
Inform & Educate

- Assessment was to be made regarding primary care providers’ comfort level regarding testing/treatment or accessing referral services for their patients.
- Information regarding access to hepatitis C specific professional education opportunities was to be provided.
- Accessible & understandable web resources currently under development.
Mobilize

- Examine needs of primary care providers to provide greater access to care
- Identify HCV as a priority in ensuring the health of Maryland
- Improve current screening practices
- Develop a more systematic way to access treatment & referral services
- Expand current HCV counseling & treatment programs
Develop Policies & Plans to Address:

- Limitations faced by health departments
  - Patient population characteristics
  - Deficit in staffing
  - Partial data entry
- Inconsistent knowledge base concerning HCV testing & treatment services
Enforce

- Health departments mandated to report HCV cases while some private healthcare providers do not
- Guidelines for case investigation disseminated by DHMH
- Follow testing & classification guidelines set forth by CDC
  - Difficulties associated with classification criteria
Inconsistencies & Deficits detrimental to the health care system.

Need improved communication to the general public concerning hepatitis C prevention and control activities.

Education is essential on both the public and professional level.
An improved level of comfort on the part of primary care providers in treating HCV positive individuals will lead to an improvement in not only the accessibility of services for patients in Baltimore, but also in the quality of care received.
Evaluate

- Identify primary health care providers’ level of knowledge regarding hepatitis C and its impact on the local community
- Identify gaps in professional knowledge regarding hepatitis C
Research

- Identify gaps in professional knowledge
- Identify barriers primary care providers face in providing services or referrals for HCV positive individuals
- Identify barriers individuals face in accessing testing & treatment services
Resources


