



Opioid Solutions: Core Strategies

March 12, 2026

KACo Opioid Solutions Learning Opportunities



Kentucky counties continue to lead the way in addressing the opioid epidemic through thoughtful, strategic use of opioid settlement dollars. To support this work, KACo is launching Opioid Solutions, a nine-part webinar series in 2026 designed to help counties better understand and implement the core strategies outlined in [Exhibit E](#) of the national opioid settlements.

Each monthly session will take a deep dive into one allowable strategy area and will include:

- A clear explanation of the strategy and how it fits within settlement requirements
- Practical guidance for local implementation
- Real-world examples of county-funded opioid abatement programs
- Tips to support impact, sustainability, and compliance



Allowable uses of Opioid Settlement Funds



Core strategies:

- **Naloxone** or other opioid overdose reversal drugs
- **Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) / MAT**
- Services for **pregnant women and parents**
- Expanding treatment for **neonatal abstinence syndrome**
- Expansion of **warm hand-off programs** and recovery services
- Treatment for **incarcerated populations**
- **Prevention** programs
- Expanding **syringe service** programs
- Evidence-based **data collection** on the effectiveness of abatement strategies

See Exhibit E, the National Opioid Settlement Agreement

Prevent overdose deaths and other harms



Support syringe service programs with supplies, staff, peer support, and care connections.

Expand testing and treatment for HIV, Hepatitis C, and other infectious diseases.

Fund mobile units offering harm reduction, treatment, and recovery support.

Train healthcare providers and peers in harm reduction strategies.

Support routine fentanyl screening in clinical toxicology tests.



Counties in Action



McCracken County

- Expanded harm reduction partnership with Purchase District Health Department to provide services in community and jail



Letcher County

- Established a Hub with Kentucky River District Health Department, these services expand the capacity



KACo Opioid Solutions Learning Opportunities



Check out KACo's resource library for continuing education opportunities highlighting how counties are using their opioid settlement funds in innovative, effective, and sustainable ways. You'll find best practices on topics such as youth prevention, peer support, access to treatment, quick response teams, and more. Stay tuned for new resources and updates!

Opioid Settlement Resource Library

A white question mark is centered on a light purple rectangular background, which is placed on top of a stack of papers.

Frequently Asked Questions

A photograph of the Kentucky State Capitol building, showing its grand architecture and a large dome, with a paved walkway leading towards it.

Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission

A photograph of a classical statue of Lady Justice, holding a pair of scales and a sword, set against a blurred background.

Settlement Agreements and Exhibits

A photograph of a laptop displaying a webinar interface with the word "WEBINAR" on the screen, next to a smartphone and some papers.

Archived Trainings and Recordings

A photograph of several people in a meeting, with their faces obscured by white boxes, holding up documents or papers.

Tools, Templates and Planning

A photograph of a hand reaching out to help another person, with a blurred background.

Approved Uses and Resources

Opioid Settlement Advisor



- **Guidance on opioid settlement use**
- **Review of allowable expenses**
- **Support for long-term and strategic planning**
- **Access to templates and standardized forms**
- **Assistance with mandatory reporting requirements**
- **Review of best practices and peer examples**
- **Training and education opportunities**
- **Referrals to qualified practitioners and subject-matter experts**

Lauren Carr

lauren.carr@kaco.org

Opioid Abatement Funds to Advance Hepatitis C Elimination

Katie Gardner, RN-BSN
Viral Hepatitis Program

March 12, 2026



Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



TEAM 
KENTUCKY[®]
CABINET FOR HEALTH
AND FAMILY SERVICES

Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to

1. Recognize that Kentucky's rate of hepatitis C is higher than the US due to injection drug use (IDU) and addiction.
2. Understand that hepatitis C is preventable and curable and that **not treating hepatitis C is costly**.
3. Understand that Exhibit E of the 2023 Commission Teva Global Opioid Settlement Agreement states that opioid abatement funds (OAFs) can be used for "**Expanding access to testing and treatment for infectious diseases such as...Hepatitis C resulting from intravenous opioid use.**"
4. Identify evidence-based strategies to support hepatitis C care utilizing OAFs through partnerships between government, public health, corrections, addiction treatment, etc.

Viral Hepatitis Program – Hepatitis C Elimination Plan

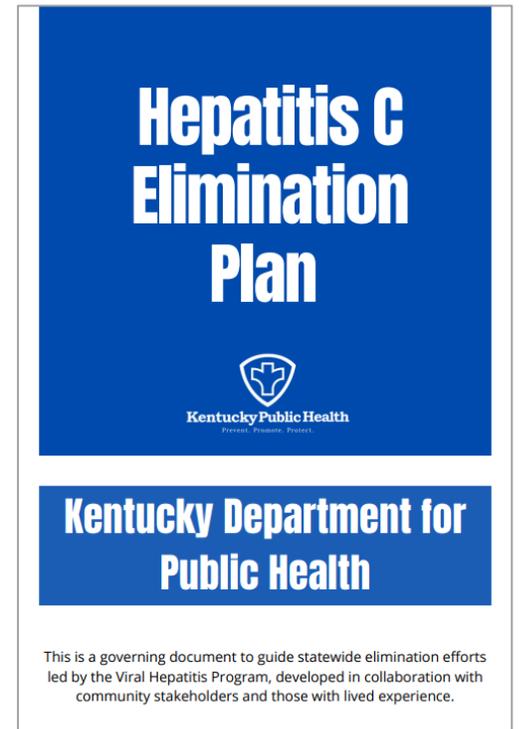
🛡️ The Viral Hepatitis Program (VHP) is responsible for prevention efforts and enhanced surveillance for adult hepatitis B, adult hepatitis C and perinatal hepatitis C.

🛡️ Elimination planning (2021-2022):

- Community partners engaged
- Priority populations identified
- Evidence-based interventions to expand/encourage linkage



KY HCV
Elimination
Plan



Opioid Abatement Funds for Hepatitis C Care

Opioid Settlement Funds (OSFs)

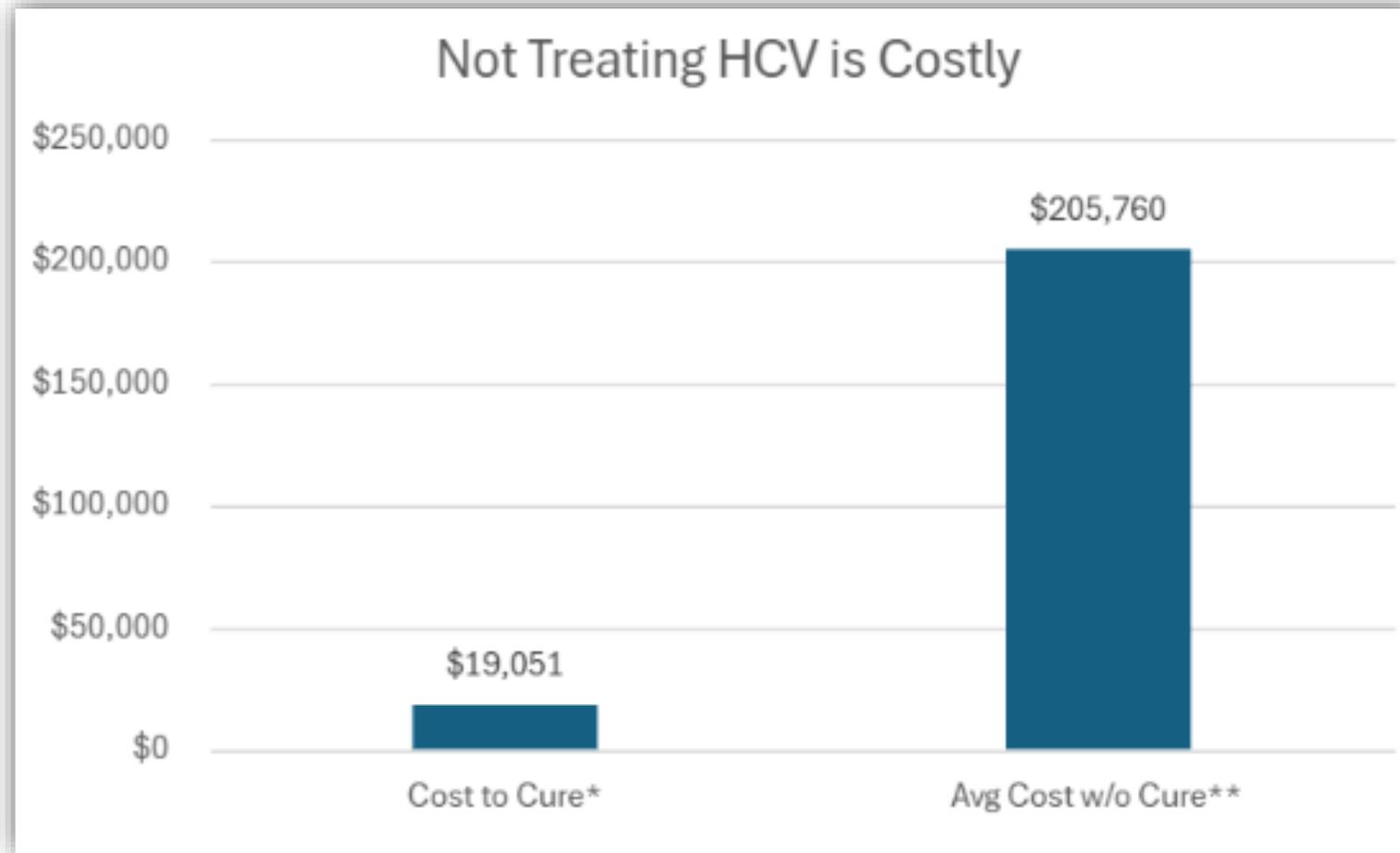
- Commission Teva Global Opioid Settlement Agreement (2023) – Exhibit E, Schedule B Approved Uses (H, 10): PREVENT OVERDOSE DEATHS AND OTHER HARMS (HARM REDUCTION)

"Support efforts to prevent or reduce...opioid-related harms through...strategies that may include, but are not limited to, the following:"

10. Expanding access to testing and treatment for infectious diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C resulting from intravenous opioid use.

Principles for the Use of Funds From the Opioid Litigation <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/law/statutes/statute.aspx?id=52961> <https://nationalopioidsettlement.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/TEVA-Exhibit-E.pdf> opioidsettlementguides.com/kentucky

Not Treating Hepatitis C is Costly



*Barber et al. 2020. "Price of a hepatitis C cure: Cost of production and current prices for direct-acting antivirals in 50 countries." *Journal of Virus Eradication*. **Razavi, Homie et al. 2013. "Chronic Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Disease Burden Cost in the United States." *Hepatology*.

Increasing Hepatitis C Treatment in US: Big Savings

**\$7 Billion
in Savings**

**in US over 10 years if treatment is
increased to 100%**

<https://www.cbo.gov/publication/60407#footnote-020>

Hepatitis C Cure: Benefits for People with Addiction

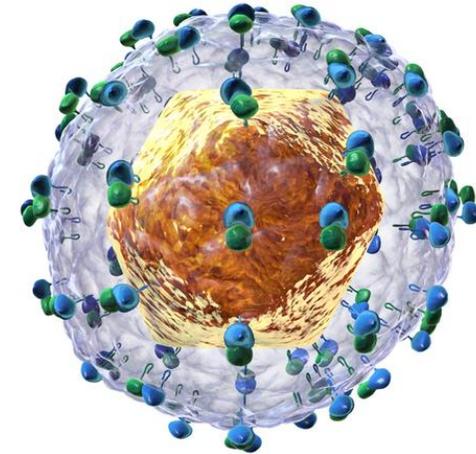
- *Curing hepatitis C is relatively easy*
- Achieving this positive health milestone is one way to help people take control of their lives



Evon DM, Kim HP, Edwards A, Carda-Auten J, Reeve BB, Golin CE, Fried MW. "If I Get Cured, My Whole Quality of Life Will Change": Patients' Anticipated and Actualized Benefits Following Cure from Chronic Hepatitis C. *Dig Dis Sci.* 2022 Jan;67(1):100-120. doi: 10.1007/s10620-021-06829-2. Epub 2021 Feb 2.

Hepatitis C Treatment in Active Addiction

- **Providing hepatitis C treatment for people who are in active addiction can reduce the spread of hepatitis C**



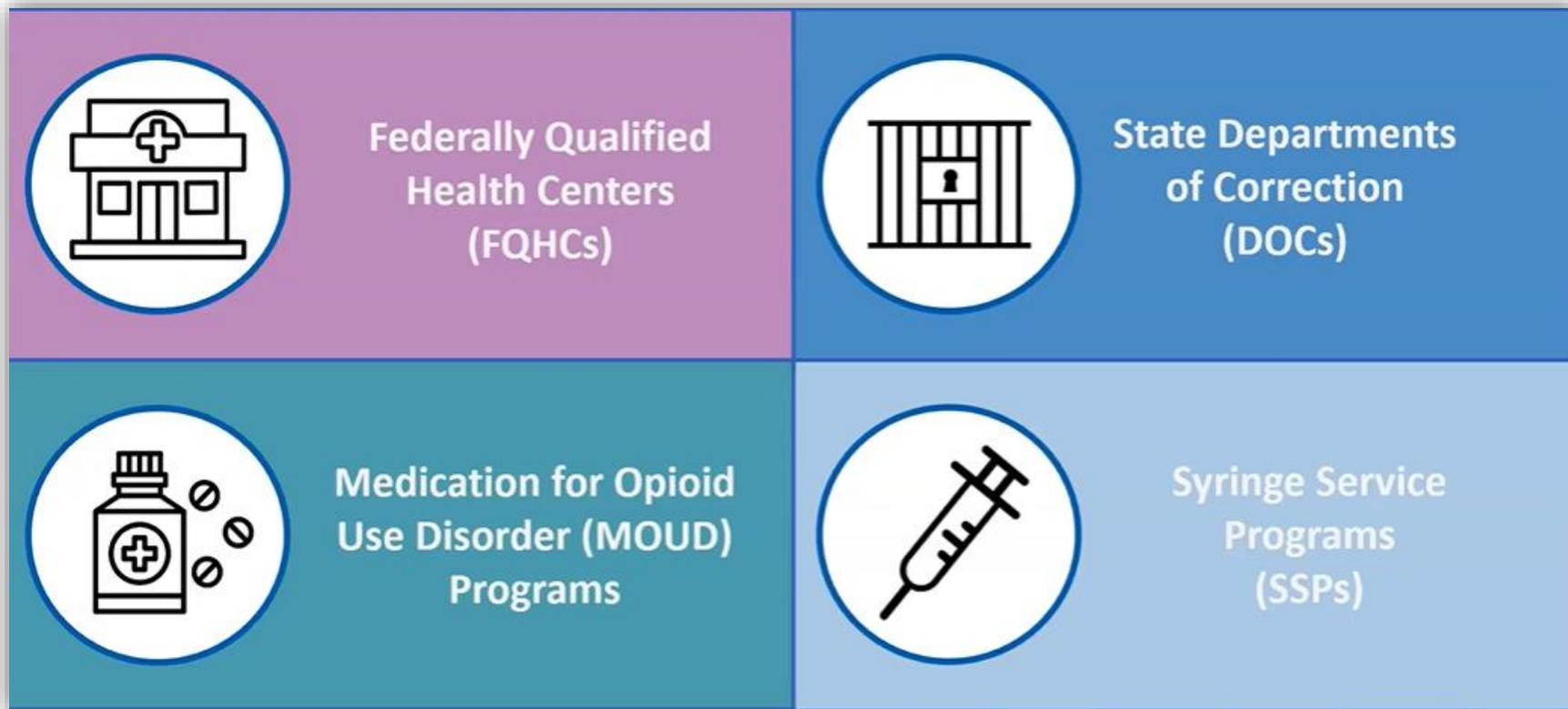
Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)

ThePhoto by PhotoAuthor is licensed under CCYSA.

<https://www.hepatitisc.uw.edu/go/key-populations-situations/treatment-substance-use/core-concept/>

Priority High-Impact Settings to Advance Hepatitis C Care

- **Hepatitis C Testing and Treatment in**



[Unlocking HCV Care in Key Settings - National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable \(2023\)](#)

Hepatitis C Basics

What is Hepatitis C?

- HCV (hepatitis C virus) or “hep C”: viral infection that impacts the liver
- Spread when someone comes into contact with blood from a person who is infected with hepatitis C
- A leading **infectious** cause of death in US (Ly et al, 2016)
- A leading cause of liver cancer and liver transplants

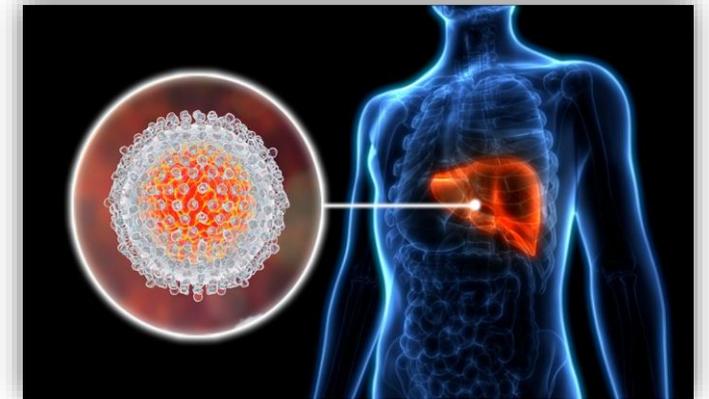


Image: [cdc.gov/hepatitis-c/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis-c/index.html)

UK HealthCare

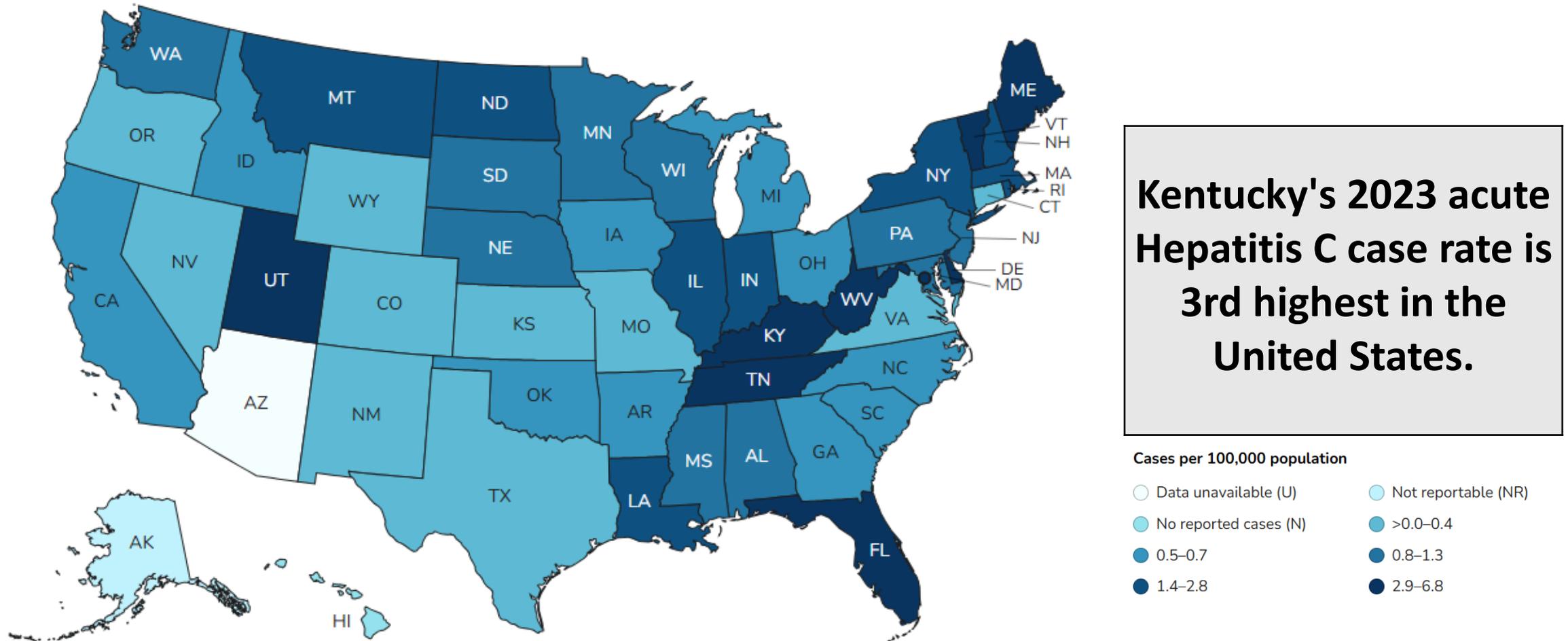
UK Transplant Center performs record number of liver transplants in 2024

By Hilary Brown Jan. 21, 2025

Media Resources

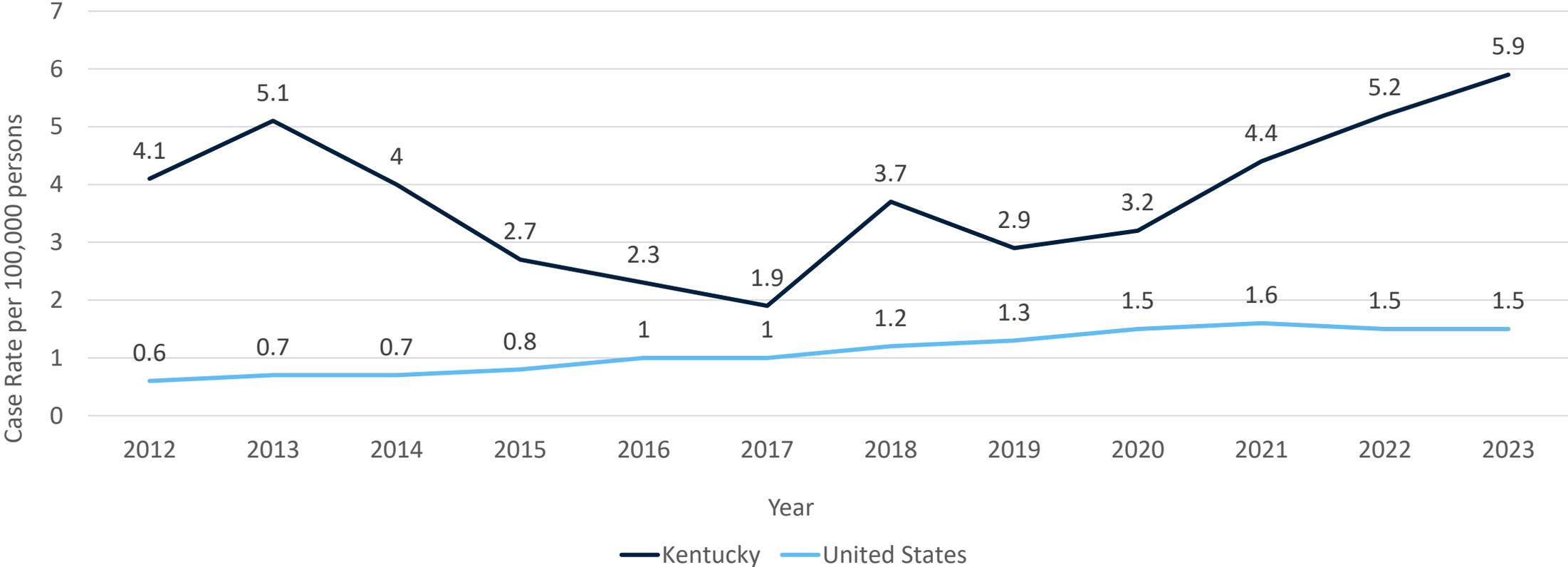
<https://uknow.uky.edu/uk-healthcare/uk-transplant-center-performs-record-number-liver-transplants-2024>

United States: Acute Hepatitis C Case Rates by State/Jurisdiction, 2023



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Report – United States, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis-surveillance-2023/about/index.html> Published April 2025. Accessed [April 16, 2025].

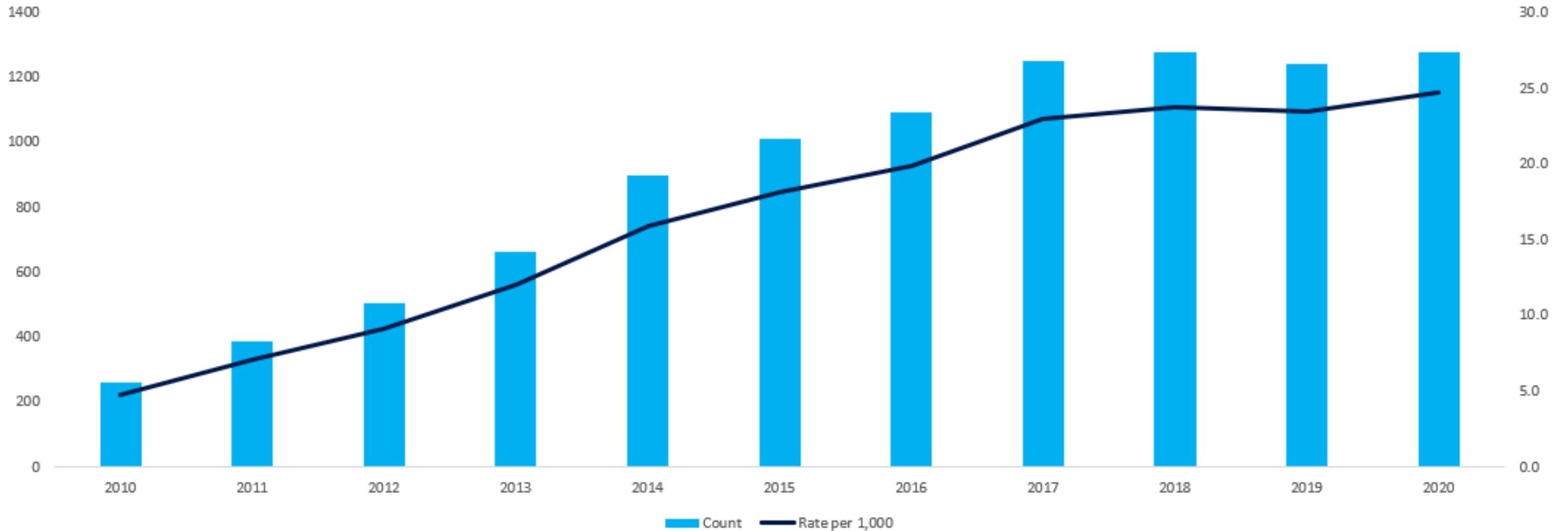
Kentucky and The United States, Acute Hepatitis C Case Rates per 100k, 2012 – 2023



Kentucky Department for Public Health, Viral Hepatitis Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Viral Hepatitis Surveillance Report – United States, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis-surveillance-2023/about/index.html> Published April 2025. Accessed [April 16, 2025].

Kentucky: Perinatal HCV Exposure

Reported Hepatitis C Status of Mother among Kentucky Resident Births, 2010-2020

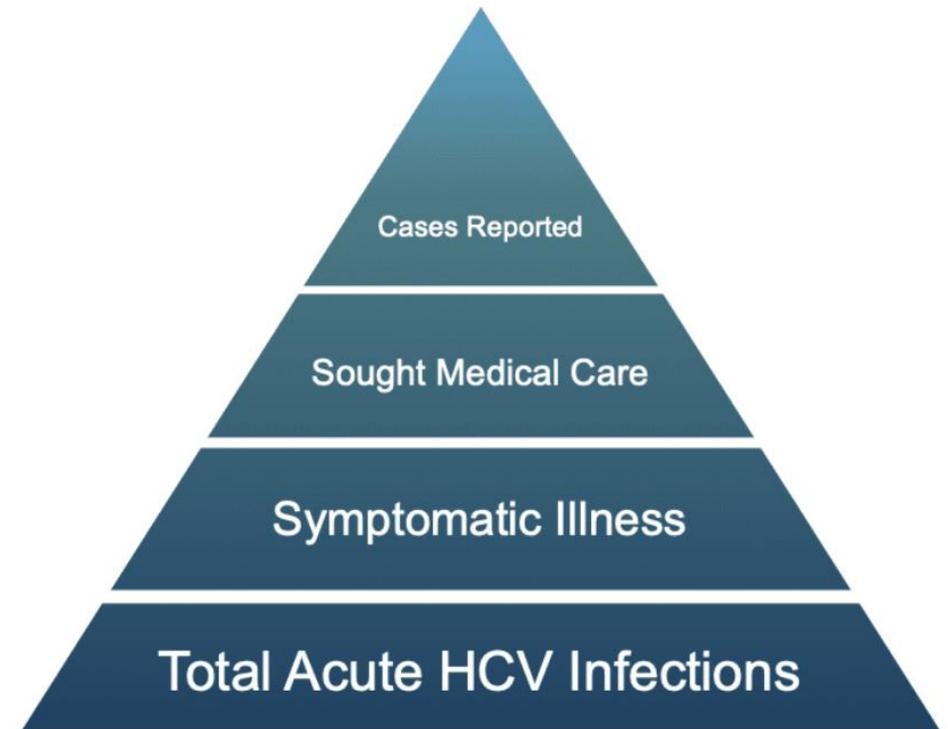


KDPH, Office of Vital Statistics

Reported Cases Versus Actual Infections

50%

of people living with hepatitis C may not know they have it



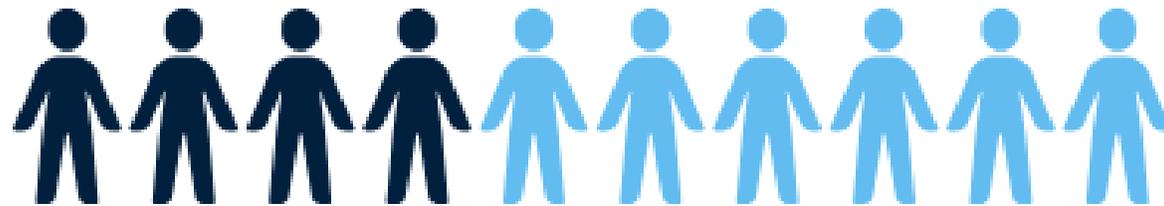
[Core Concepts - HCV Epidemiology in the United States - Screening and Diagnosis of Hepatitis C Infection - Hepatitis C Online](#)

Source: modified from Kleven RM, Liu S, Roberts H, Jiles RB, Holmberg SD. Estimating acute viral hepatitis infections from nationally reported cases. Am J Public Health. 2014;104:482-7.

Hepatitis C Risk Factors: Injection Drug Use

Injection drug use (IDU) is the most commonly reported risk factor for hepatitis C.

40% of people who have recently injected drugs have hep C



<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics/2022surveillance/hepatitis-c/table-3.3.htm>
https://www.natap.org/2024/HCV/estimating_hepatitis_c_prevalence_in_the_united.878.pdf

54 Counties in Kentucky Vulnerable to Rapid Spread of HIV/HCV in People Who Inject Drugs

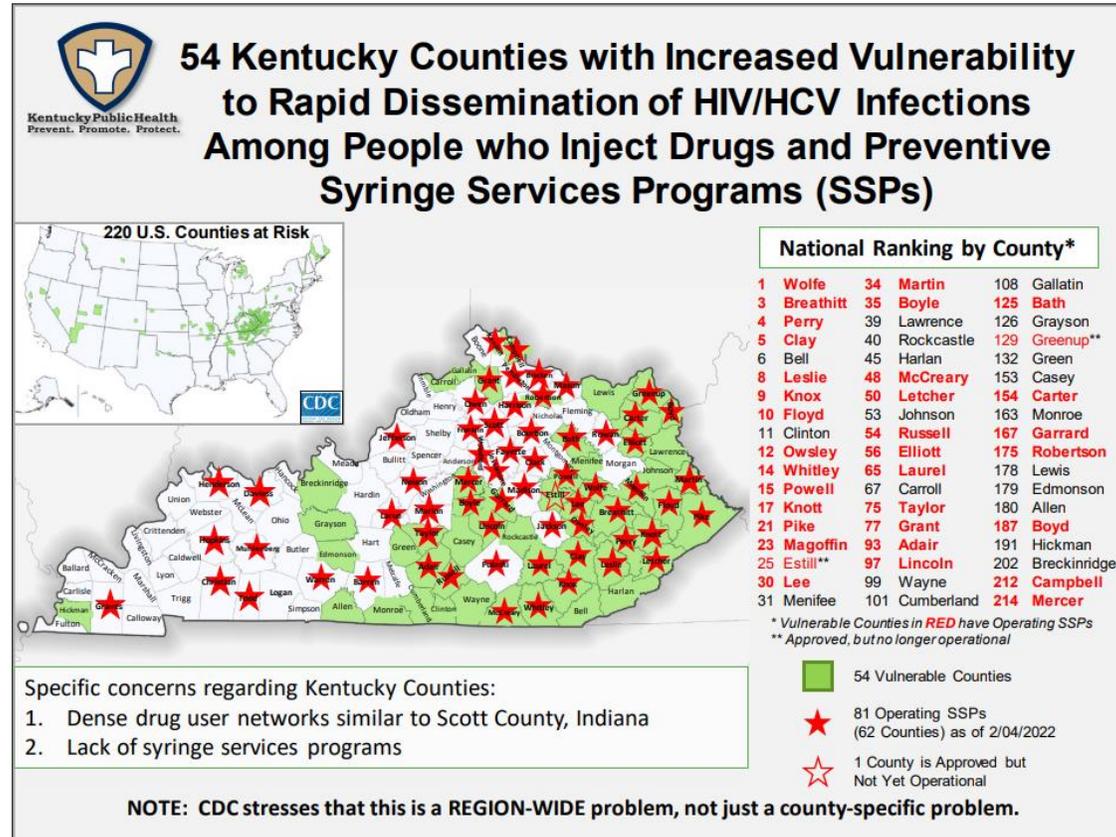


Image: CHFS PowerPoint Presentation

Van Handel, M. M., Rose, C. E., Hallisey, E. J., Kolling, J. L., Zibbell, J. E., Lewis, B., Bohm, M. K., Jones, C. M., Flanagan, B. E., Siddiqi, A. E., Iqbal, K., Dent, A. L., Mermin, J. H., McCray, E., Ward, J. W., & Brooks, J. T. (2016). County-Level Vulnerability Assessment for Rapid Dissemination of HIV or HCV Infections Among Persons Who Inject Drugs, United States. *Journal of acquired immune deficiency syndromes (1999)*, 73(3), 323–331. <https://doi.org/10.1097/QAI.0000000000001098>

Hepatitis C Transmission

- **Using non-sterile equipment for drug use**
- Non-sterile tattooing/piercing
- Sexual contact (rare)
- Non-sterile medical procedures
- Needle-stick injuries
- Sharing toothbrushes, razors, nail clippers
- Perinatal hepatitis C transmission



Perinatal Hepatitis C Transmission

- **Perinatal**
 - The period before, during, or shortly after birth
- Chronic hepatitis C infection will develop in ~6% of all infants exposed during pregnancy or delivery
- Hepatitis C treatment can begin at 3 years old



publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/27131/CDC-calls-for-early-testing-for-hepatitis-C-virus?autologincheck=redirected

Transmission, Cont.

- **Hepatitis C can NOT be transmitted by sharing clothing, eating utensils or food/drinks, coughing, hugging, holding hands, kissing, breastfeeding.**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (n.d.). Hepatitis C Prevention and Control. <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis-c/prevention/>

Hepatitis C and Incarceration

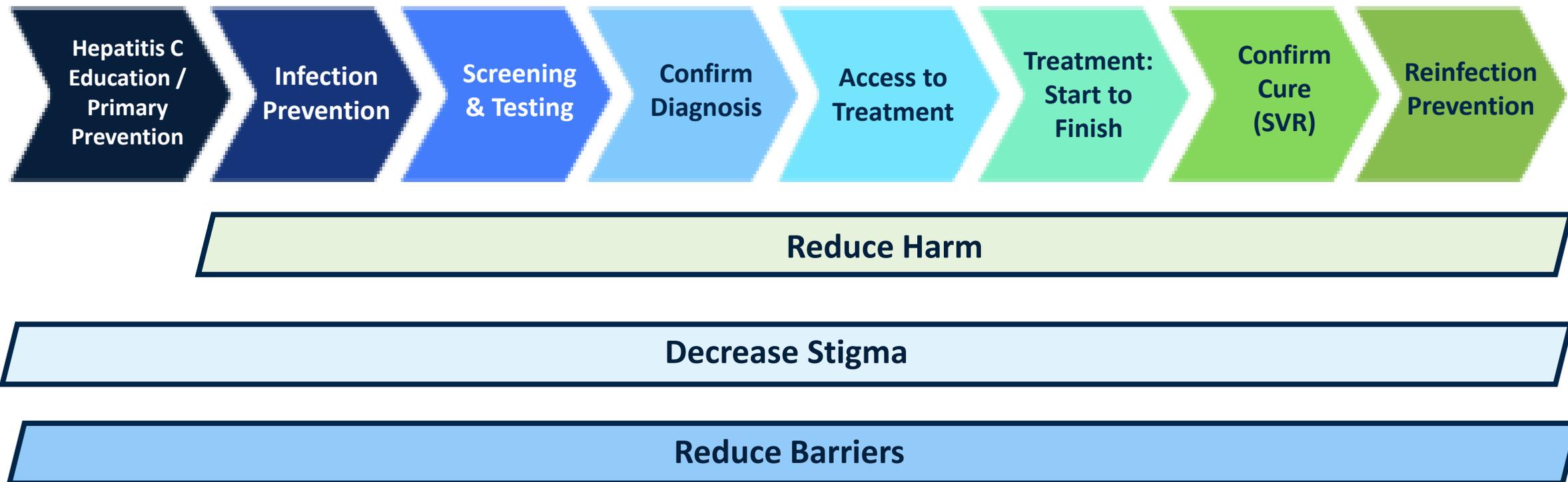
- People who have a history of incarceration have a higher prevalence of hepatitis C than the general population (10-50% vs 1%)



Weinbaum C, Lyerla R, Margolis HS; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prevention and control of infections with hepatitis viruses in correctional settings. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. MMWR Recomm Rep. 2003 Jan 24;52(RR-1):1-36; quiz CE1-4. Erratum in: MMWR Recomm Rep. 2003 Mar 14;52(10):205-14. PMID: 12562146.

OAFs and Hepatitis C Care

Opioid Abatement Funds Could Help Support:



OAFs Can Support Hepatitis C Awareness and Education

OAFs to Support Hepatitis C Education: Messages

- **Hepatitis C Awareness Messages:**
 - Importance of testing
 - Myth-busting
 - Where to get testing
 - Where to get treatment
 - “Find Hepatitis C Treatment Now KY”



[Image: Aspire Indiana Health Facebook](#)

OAFs to Support Hepatitis C Education: PSAs

- **Hepatitis C Awareness Campaigns**
 - Web-based public service announcements (PSAs)
 - Websites with updated information about treatment provider location
 - Billboards



[Image: Aspire Indiana Health Facebook](#)

OAFs Support Hepatitis C Education: Print Materials

In Jails, Local Health Departments, Addiction Treatment Clinics, Community-Based Organizations, etc.:



HEPATITIS C DID YOU KNOW?

CDC | <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis-c/prevention>

Any equipment used to prepare drugs can spread hepatitis C when shared.

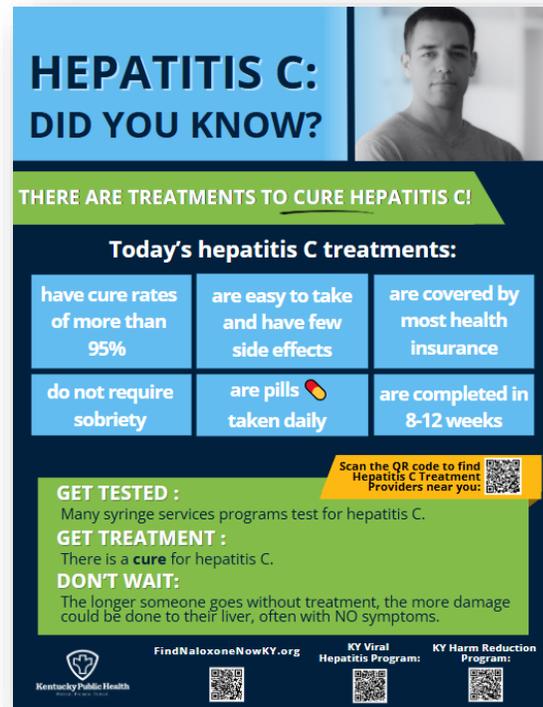
- Sharing supplies used to prepare, inject, inhale, or smoke drugs can spread hepatitis C. This includes surfaces, straws, pipes, spoons, ties, cookers, filters or other supplies.
- Sharing or reusing syringes increases the chance of spreading the hepatitis C virus.

GET TESTED : Many syringe services programs test for hepatitis C.
GET TREATMENT : There is a **cure** for hepatitis C.
DON'T WAIT: The longer someone goes without treatment, the more damage could be done to their liver, often with NO symptoms.

Scan the QR code to find a Syringe Services Program near you.

FindNaloxoneNowKY.org
KY Viral Hepatitis Program:
KY Harm Reduction Program:

Kentucky Public Health



HEPATITIS C: DID YOU KNOW?

THERE ARE TREATMENTS TO CURE HEPATITIS C!

Today's hepatitis C treatments:

have cure rates of more than 95%	are easy to take and have few side effects	are covered by most health insurance
do not require sobriety	are pills taken daily	are completed in 8-12 weeks

GET TESTED : Many syringe services programs test for hepatitis C.
GET TREATMENT : There is a **cure** for hepatitis C.
DON'T WAIT: The longer someone goes without treatment, the more damage could be done to their liver, often with NO symptoms.

Scan the QR code to find Hepatitis C Treatment Providers near you.

FindNaloxoneNowKY.org
KY Viral Hepatitis Program:
KY Harm Reduction Program:

Kentucky Public Health



A collection of educational materials including:

- Testing for Hepatitis C:** It is important to get tested for hepatitis C, especially if you think you've been exposed. Many people do not have symptoms of hepatitis C infection, so testing is the only way to know if you have been infected.
- Who should be tested?**
 - All adults 18 and older at least once in their lifetime.
 - Pregnant people during each pregnancy.
 - People who have been incarcerated.
 - People who use drugs.
 - People who participate in certain high risk behaviors that increase their risk of disease or injury.
- Hepatitis C Treatment:** There is no vaccine for hepatitis C. However, there are safe and effective treatments. These treatments can cure hepatitis C and have been available since 2014. If you are diagnosed with hepatitis C, talk to your doctor right away about getting treatment that is right for you.
- Treatments for hepatitis C:**
 - Are easy to take
 - Have few side effects
 - Can cure more than 95% of people in just 8-12 weeks
 - Are often covered by insurance
 - Do not require sobriety
- 5 Steps to Hepatitis C Treatment:**
 1. Get tested for hepatitis C antibodies, usually a fingerstick blood test or a blood draw.
 2. If positive, get further blood testing to see if the hepatitis C virus is active in your body and to check your liver and blood health.
 3. A healthcare provider that treats hepatitis C may prescribe treatment.
 4. Take medication for 8-12 weeks as prescribed until it is completed.
 5. Get tested for hepatitis C 12 weeks after finishing treatment to be sure the treatment worked.
- Untreated Hepatitis C:** If left untreated, hepatitis C can cause serious health problems, including liver damage, liver cancer and even death. The longer someone with hepatitis C goes without treatment, the more damage is done to their liver.
- Harm Reduction:** The best way to avoid someone else's blood is to use clean injection equipment.
- Hepatitis C Common Preventable Curable:** Kentucky Public Health logo.

QR code: 

PDFs of Educational Materials: <https://redcap.chfs.ky.gov/surveys/?s=8MCCEFAKTN4WA9FA>

Peer Education in Jails/Prisons

- **Jail/Prison Inmates are trained as Peer Educators**
 - Share health information with fellow inmates
 - Reduce risk behaviors
 - Increase testing



[Fifteen Years of Changing the Lives of Incarcerated People - Project ECHO](#)

OAFs Can Support Hepatitis C Testing

Many people with chronic hepatitis C have
NO symptoms for a long time.

The only way to know if you have
hepatitis C is to
GET TESTED

[cdc.gov/hepatitis-c/signs-symptoms/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis-c/signs-symptoms/index.html)

CDC Hepatitis C Testing Guidelines, 2020



***Every adult
should be
tested at least
once.***



**Testing should
occur during
every
pregnancy.**



**People with risk
factors should
be tested
regularly.**

cdc.gov/hepatitis-c/testing/index.html

Where Can Hepatitis C Testing Happen?

- **Community Health Centers**
- **Addiction Treatment Clinics**
- **Local Health Departments**
- **Jails/Prisons**
- **Community Corrections**
- **Community-Based Organizations**
- **Mobile Clinics**



[Image: Hep C Testing & Treatment | QuIHN Free & Confidential - Quihn](#)

OAFs to Support Hepatitis C Testing

- Cover cost of hepatitis C testing kits and supplies
- Cover lab costs for hepatitis C testing for people with a history of IDU
- Buy a Cepheid CLIA Waived Xpert® Point-of-Care HCV RNA Machine (and test cartridges)
- Fund staff positions and training to increase testing capacity
- Fund mobile outreach units and staffing to provide testing



Image: [Addiction In The Pandemic: The \\$350M Effort To Heal Communities In Opioid Crisis](#)

Image: [Xpert® HCV Info](#)

OAFs Can Support Hepatitis C Treatment and Cure

Today's Hepatitis C Treatments

- Have cure rates of more than 95%
- Are easy to take and have few side effects
- Are covered by most health insurance
- Should not require sobriety
- Are pills taken daily
- Are completed in 8-12 weeks



<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/hepc-treatment/index.html>

Low Numbers of Hepatitis C Treatment in the US

Timely Hepatitis C Treatment* by Insurance Type

Medicaid

23%

77% not treated

Medicare

28%

72% not treated

Private

35%

65% not treated

0%

50%

100%

*Hepatitis C treatment started within 12 months of diagnosis during January 30, 2019 to October 31, 2020

VitalSigns[™]

Source: August 2022 Vital Signs



CS331675

- Less than 1 in 3 people with health insurance receiving treatment within a year of diagnosis
- Treatment is lowest among patients with Medicaid: 1 in 4

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0809-hepatitis-treatment.html>

Where Can Someone Get Hepatitis C Treatment?



Primary Care Clinics



Addiction Treatment
Clinics



Local Health
Departments

Hepatitis C Treatment Access Through Partnerships

- **Telehealth Partnerships**
- **Sharing Space**
- **Enhanced Linkage**
 - Mobile Clinics
 - Local Health Departments
 - Primary Care (Federally Qualified Health Centers, Community Health Centers, etc.)
 - Addiction Treatment Clinics
 - Jails, Reentry, Probation & Parole, etc.



Telemedicine Partnerships

Telehealth Partnerships

- **Example: The University of Kentucky's Bluegrass Care Clinic** utilizes telehealth to offer hepatitis C treatment in non-traditional settings.
 - » If you would like additional information, please contact **Amanda Wilburn** at abwilb2@uky.edu



Kentucky Hepatitis Academic Mentorship Program (KHAMP)

A Kentucky Rural Health Association (KRHA) Program

- For providers who are interested in providing hepatitis C services in their local communities
- Provides ongoing mentorship and support



kyrha.org/khamp

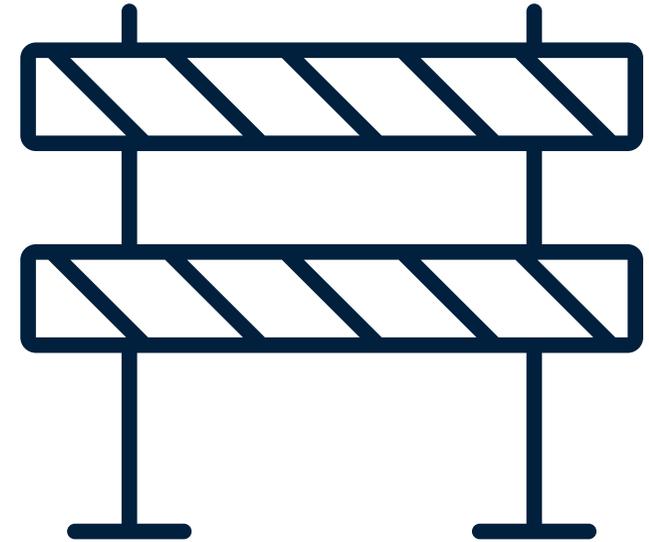
OAFs to Support Hepatitis C Treatment

- Medication costs for **people who are incarcerated** with history of IDU
- Medication costs for **people without insurance** with history of IDU
- Fund **hepatitis C treatment provider positions** in LHDs, Addiction Treatment Clinics, Jails, Prisons, Mobile Clinics, etc.
- Support **telehealth infrastructure and partnerships** to facilitate treatment for people with history of IDU
- Support purchase of **mobile outreach units** and staffing
- Support **provider training** about hepatitis C treatment (i.e. KHAMP)

OAFs Can Support Linkage to Hepatitis C Care

Barriers to Hepatitis C Treatment

- Lack of Hepatitis C Awareness/Education
- No Health Insurance
- No Transportation
- No Housing
- Lack of technology (internet, phone, etc.)
- Patients' past negative healthcare experiences



Hepatitis C Care Navigators

- **Enhanced Hepatitis C Linkage Navigation can help to address barriers and connect people to care**



Image: <https://www.hepcoalition.org/>

OAFs to Support Linkage: Hepatitis C Care Navigators

Hepatitis C Linkage Navigators, located in jails, LHDs, Addiction Treatment Clinics, etc.

- **Regularly update a list** of person-centered, low-barrier hepatitis C treatment providers
- **Provide warm hand-offs** to hepatitis C treatment providers
 - Have relationships with providers
 - Help make appointments
 - Assist with healthcare navigation
- **Follow up** with text reminders, phone calls, etc.
- **Assist with barriers to care**



Image: <https://www.hepcoalition.org/>

OAFs to Support Linkage

- **Hepatitis C Linkage Navigators** can assist people with a history of IDU to access health insurance benefits
- **Kentucky Prescription Assistance Program (KPAP) Advocates**
 - KPAP helps qualifying individuals identify sources of free and low-cost medications offered by pharmaceutical companies, *potentially including treatment for hepatitis C*
 - **KPAP Hotline: 1-800-633-8100** Mon.-Fri. 8am to 4pm EST
 - **Email to become an advocate:** Jennifer.ToribioNaas@ky.gov



KPAP Website:



OAFs to Support Linkage: Transportation & Housing

- **Transportation**

- Meet people where they are: telehealth, mobile units
- Gas cards, bus passes, incentives
- Expanded hours of operation

- **Housing**

- Lockers on-site for medication storage
- Hepatitis C Linkage Navigators can help with housing assistance

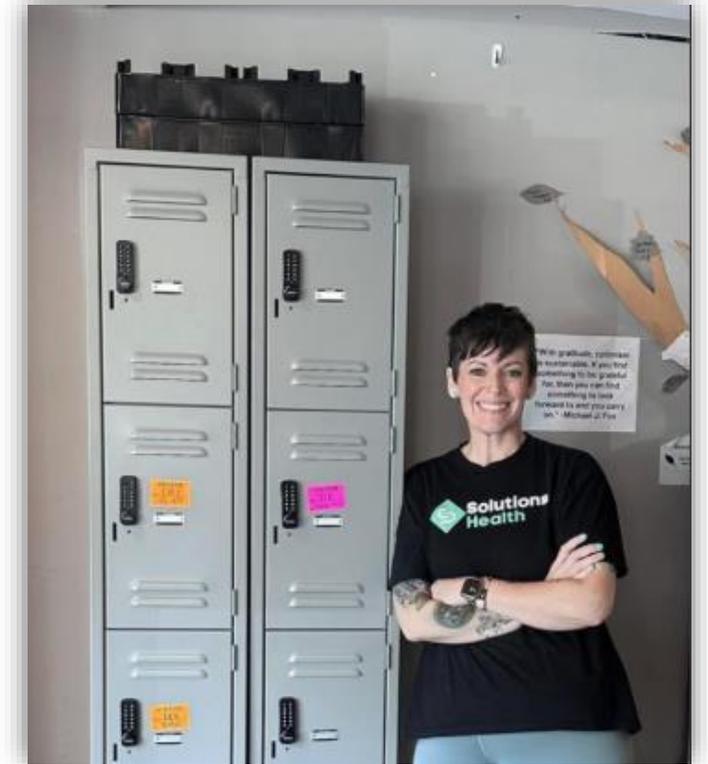


Image: <https://www.facebook.com/solutionshealthinc>

OAFs to Support Hepatitis C Linkage: Peer Support

Peer Support Models have been proven effective in increasing:

- Hepatitis C awareness
- Hepatitis C testing
- Hepatitis C treatment uptake and engagement



Sione Crawford, Nicky Bath, Peer Support Models for People With a History of Injecting Drug Use Undertaking Assessment and Treatment for Hepatitis C Virus Infection, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Volume 57, Issue suppl_2, August 2013, Pages S75–S79, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/cit297>

Stagg, H.R., Surey, J., Francis, M. *et al.* Improving engagement with healthcare in hepatitis C: a randomised controlled trial of a peer support intervention. *BMC Med* **17**, 71 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-019-1300-2>

OAFs to Support Linkage: Address Provider Stigma

Provider Trainings about Stigma

- When people experience stigma from healthcare providers, *they become less likely to seek care when they need it.*
- People who experience stigma are often unable to get what they need to stay healthy.



merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stigma. Image: shutterstock.com - 2293751923

Local Health Departments Provide Wide-Ranging and Comprehensive Care

May Include:

- ***Hepatitis C education, testing, in-house treatment or linkage to treatment***
- Prevention, testing and treatment for STIs and HIV
- Referral to Addiction Treatment, mental health services
- Safe disposal of syringes
- Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND)
- Immunizations: Hepatitis A and B, Mpox, influenza, and COVID-19
- Linkage to community resources (transportation, employment, housing, & food)

Possibilities for Hepatitis C Projects Using OSFs

Support Local Health Departments, Jails, Clinicals, etc. to

1. Create **hepatitis C awareness and educational campaigns**
2. Pay for **hepatitis C testing and treatment for people with a history of injection drug use (IDU)**
3. Hire and train **testing staff and treatment providers**
4. Hire and train **Hepatitis C Linkage Navigators**
5. Hire and train **Peer Supports**
6. Fund infrastructure to meet people where they are: **telehealth, mobile units**
7. Provide **incentives/support** for testing, treatment, cure, etc.

Hepatitis C Elimination: Let's Finish Him Off!

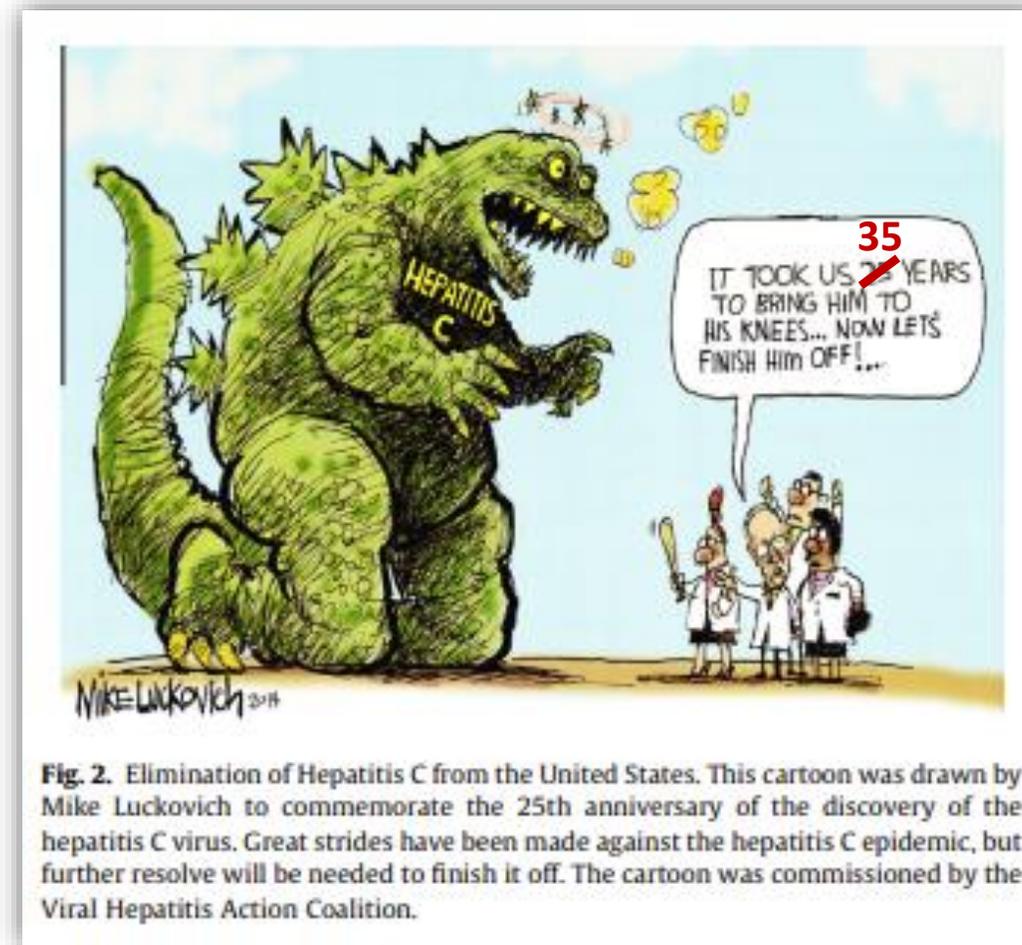


Fig. 2. Elimination of Hepatitis C from the United States. This cartoon was drawn by Mike Luckovich to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the discovery of the hepatitis C virus. Great strides have been made against the hepatitis C epidemic, but further resolve will be needed to finish it off. The cartoon was commissioned by the Viral Hepatitis Action Coalition.

Image: <https://natap.org/2014/HCV/1s2.OS0166354214002149main.pdf>

Opioid Abatement Funds for Hepatitis C Elimination

Opioid Abatement Funds to Advance Hepatitis C Elimination

Hepatitis C Elimination can

- Save money
- Save lives
- Make communities safer

Exhibit E of the [2023 Commission Teva Global Opioid Settlement Agreement](#) states that Opioid Abatement Funds can be used for expanding access to Hepatitis C testing and cure.

For more information contact the Viral Hepatitis Program at VHP@ky.gov



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Opioid Abatement Funds to Advance Hepatitis C Elimination

WHY IS HEPATITIS C ELIMINATION IMPORTANT?

Injection drug use is a risk factor for hepatitis C. However, people who need hepatitis C testing and/or cure are often unable to access care. **Hepatitis C treatment has a 95% cure rate and has been shown to increase retention** in Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) programs.



WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO COUNTIES?

Investing in Hepatitis C Elimination can:

- Prevent costly outbreaks (such as HIV clusters like those in rural Indiana and West Virginia)
- Reduce long-term health care costs related to untreated infections in Jails, Hospitals, etc.
- Save lives and improve community health and productivity

HOW CAN COUNTIES USE OPIOID ABATEMENT FUNDS FOR HEPATITIS C ELIMINATION?

1. **Scale Up Hepatitis C Testing**
Fund community-based testing for hepatitis C and other infectious diseases in Syringe Services Programs (SSPs), Jails, Drug Courts, Substance Use Treatment programs, and other settings
2. **Expand Treatment Access to Cure Hepatitis C**
Support Local Health Departments, SSPs, Jails, and Clinics to provide low barrier hepatitis C treatment
3. **Provide Wrap-Around Support Services**
Cover cost of Peer Supports, transportation assistance, housing navigation, medication storage, and other support services that can help with treatment linkage and adherence

Resources

- [Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission](#)
- [Kentucky Association of Counties](#)
- [National Opioid Settlements](#)
- [Kentucky Department for Public Health Viral Hepatitis Program](#)

Exhibit E of the [2023 Commission Teva Global Opioid Settlement Agreement](#) States that opioid abatement funds can be used for

“Expanding access to testing and treatment for infectious diseases such as...Hepatitis C resulting from intravenous opioid use.”

HOW CAN COUNTIES GET STARTED?

1. **Allocate a portion of Opioid Abatement Funds** towards hepatitis C testing, cure, and wrap-around care
2. **Partner with Local Health Departments, Clinics, and Jails** to launch or scale services



For More Information About Hepatitis C

KDPH Viral Hepatitis Program Website:

chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/idb/Pages/vhp.aspx



CDC Hepatitis C Information

www.cdc.gov/hepatitis-c



Hepatitis C Educational Materials

redcap.chfs.ky.gov/surveys/?s=8MCCEFAKTN4WA9FA



Resources: Finding Hepatitis C Testing and Treatment

GetTested.cdc.gov



Kentucky Syringe
Services Programs



CDC
Hepatitis C Treatment
Locator



CDC - Find HCV/STI Testing: gettested.cdc.gov

Kentucky Syringe Services Programs: chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/hab/Pages/kyseps.aspx

CDC - HCV Treatment Locator: cdc.gov/hepatitis-c/treatment/index.html#cdc_treatment_get_treatment-treatment

Resources: Learning More About Hepatitis C

- **CDC** <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis-c>
- **NASTAD** <https://nastad.org/teams/hepatitis>
- **OraSure OraQuick® HCV Rapid Antibody Test Training**
<https://orasure.com/products/training/OraQuick-HCV-Training.html>
- **National Harm Reduction Coalition** <https://harmreduction.org/issues/hepatitis-c>
- **Hepatitis Education Project (HEP)** <https://hep.org>
- **NACCHO Viral Hepatitis Resources** <https://www.naccho.org/programs/community-health/infectious-disease/hiv-sti/viral-hepatitis>
- **National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable** <https://nvhr.org>
- **HepVu** <https://hepvu.org>

Thank You!

Viral Hepatitis Program Staff

- Program Lead: Dia Obonyo dia.obonyo@ky.gov
- Epidemiologist III: Claire Holladay claire.holladay@ky.gov
- Epidemiologist II: Christina D'Agostino christina.dagostino@ky.gov
- Perinatal Coordinator/Epi: Jordan Murphy jordan.murphy@ky.gov
- Program Coordinator: Katie Gardner katie.gardner@ky.gov

Viral Hepatitis Program Email: VHP@ky.gov

Viral Hepatitis Program Website: chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/idb/Pages/vhp.aspx

VHP Website:



VHP Email List



VHP Educational Materials



VHP Data Request

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Indiana
Department
of
Health

ADDRESSING HEPATITIS C IN INDIANA USING OPIOID ABATEMENT FUNDS: A LOOK AT THE CONNECT TO CURE PROGRAM

BRITTANY M. GROSS, MPH, CHW
VIRAL HEPATITIS SERVICES
PROGRAM MANAGER

03/12/2026

OUR MISSION:

To promote, protect, and improve the health and safety of all Hoosiers.

OUR VISION:

Every Hoosier reaches optimal health regardless of where they live, learn, work, or play.



Indiana At A Glance

- 92 counties, 42 rural, 33 mixed and 17 urban
- Home-rule state, public health authority rests at the county or local level
- Ranked No. 1 in the nation for acute reported hepatitis C cases in 2018 and 2019
 - Have since fallen in the rankings to 11th nationally
 - Many more states have since developed enhanced surveillance reporting
- Total population: 6.92 million people in 2024
- Syringe service programming
 - Six counties, with 20+ non-syringe harm reduction partners
- HIV and HCV Elimination: The Zero is Possible Plan



Connect to Cure (CtC)

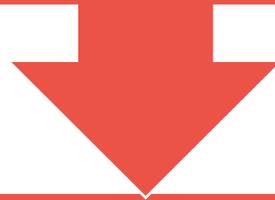
Connect to Cure is collaborative program implemented, overseen and guided by the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH), The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis (THFGI), and The Damien Center

Oversight of the program is a unique partnership between state, private and public entities:

- THFGI - A non-profit, private organization with a health focus- has a strong role in the fiscal oversight
- The Damien Center- An FQHC with a long history and experience in working with people living with HIV and other conditions- has the lead on oversight programmatically
- IDOH - Provides guidance, technical assistance, data services and quality control

Connect to Cure Goals

The program was developed to make sure individuals know their hepatitis C status AND to link them to and establish care for individuals living with hepatitis C.



Connect to Cure program goals:

**Ensure
continuity
of care**

**Promote self-
sufficiency**

**Provide
customized
education**

**Provide
coordination
of services**

**Empower the
individual**

Eligibility



Any person who has tested antibody-positive for the hepatitis C virus who resides in Indiana, whether they have symptoms or not



Anyone can access this program, no matter when they test antibody-positive for hepatitis C

The Program

Creates a community of practice for care coordinators through:

- Training
- Data management system
- Outreach and community engagement
- Outreach supplies

Assists those living with hepatitis C through:

- Testing
- Insurance navigation
- Medical appointment scheduling/navigation
- Nutrition and transportation assistance cards
- Referrals to other social supports, such as housing



It's Free!

Community of Practice



Trainings

Quarterly in-person trainings are held for new care coordinators and agency supervisors, or any staff who feel they need a refresher

Care coordinators are provided access to a learning management system where recordings of trainings are placed as well as additional training topics

Training topics span from service standards to advocating for clients and many more

Data Management

Care coordinators are granted access to a secure, HIPAA compliant data management system where, testing, client data, and care coordinator notes are stored electronically for reporting purposes

Promotion

To increase awareness of this new service, several promotional materials were initially created:

- Posters
- Billboards
- Website connecttocure.org

As funding has shifted, the website has remained



Connecting to Connect to Cure



- The CtC Program encourages the sharing of the care coordinators contact information widely to clients, providers, and other referral sources
- Care coordinators found early in the program, that when clients contact them, when they are in space, they feel comfortable in, and time they can share, communication works best
- The website is maintained, up to date, with current care coordinators phone numbers, office locations and emails. The website is the best way to find any contact information for the program

Funding Evolution

CtC has evolved over time as funding has changed, but the goals have remained the same, find individuals living with hepatitis C, and link them to care

Previous Funding Sources:

- The Original pilot program that CtC was built on, which still operates within the larger CtC program receives State Funding
 - 4 sites, 4 care coordinators (CC)
- Expanded the program scope and reach with COVID-19 Federal dollars
 - 2 additional CC's, 1 additional site
 - Able to provide COVID-19 education, PPE, referrals for vaccines and transportation assistance to address both or either HCV or COVID-19 related care

Funding Evolution

Previous Funding Continued:

Statewide expansion and scope with Federal American Rescue Plan Act, ARPA, dollars through state legislature. (at its peak)

- Total 28 CC's
- 22 sites
- 13 tester/peer specialist positions
- Tests and non-syringe harm reduction supplies available to all sites
- DBS testing available
- Hep Medical Assistance Program- Hep MAP
- Transportation and nutrition cards for clients
- Promotion of the program
 - Billboards, customizable flyers and posters, website development, and social media

Opioid Funding & What It Covers

- 13 sites
- 18 care coordinators
 - At least 1 or more in every HIV and HCV elimination region of the state, called ZIP regions for our Zero is Possible Plan- Indiana's plan to eliminate HIV and HCV
 - Plus 4 state funded care coordinator
- Tests and non-syringe harm reduction supplies available to all sites
- Transportation and nutrition cards for clients
- Maintenance of website

Obtaining Opioid Abatement Funding

Champions/Advocates

- The program had a fantastic advocate who, when they learned of the possibility of obtaining opioid settlement funds, became engaged and made the case for how this program impacts those living with opioid use
- IDOH championed this idea, throwing their full support behind the use of the funds in this way

Independent Evaluation of the Connect to Cure Program

- An assessment of the full state-wide program was conducted after the 1st year. The Connect to Cure (CTC) program evaluation aimed to assess the program's success in increasing HCV awareness, testing, and treatment access across Indiana
- Insights, gathered through surveys, interviews and day-to-day observations, with significant contributions from care coordinators, were critical in understanding the strengths of the program and identifying areas for improvement

Indiana Peer Education Program (INPEP) ECHO

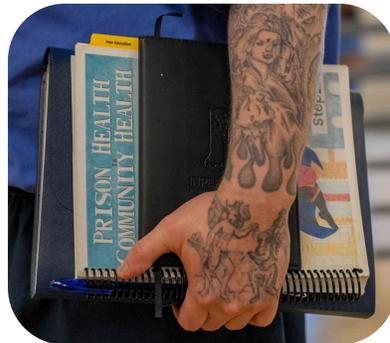
Started in 2019 and modeled after the New Mexico Peer Education Program

- **Goal of INPEP**

- Present facts
- Explore values
- Develop skills
- Eliminate stigma

- **Five Components**

- 40-hour training
- 10-hour workshops
- Monthly site visits
- TeleECHOs
- Reentry blueprinting



- **The Power of Peer Education**

- Trusted messengers
- Culturally relevant
- Reduces stigma
- Boosts screening

- **Topics include**

- Germs
- TB
- Diabetes
- STIs, HIV, HBV, HCV, HAV
- COVID-19
- SUD and harm reduction
- And more.....

By the numbers:

- 13 IDOC facilities
- >400 peers trained
- 25 40-hour trainings
- >5000 students educated

Partnerships for Elimination

T **R** **A** **I** **N** **I** **N** **G**
R **E** **S** **P** **O** **N** **S** **E**
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INPEP ECHO

Correctional Health is Community Health



Ψ Indianapolis | Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health
ECHO Center

Questions?

Brittany Gross

Viral Hepatitis Services
Program Manager

bgross@health.in.gov

