



Philadelphia Department of Public Health
Division of Disease Control

THOMAS FARLEY, MD, MPH
Health Commissioner

CAROLINE C. JOHNSON, MD
Acting Deputy Health Commissioner &
Director, Division of Disease Control

Health Notification

May is National Hepatitis Awareness Month May 10, 2016

This month, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that deaths associated with hepatitis C reached an all-time high of 19,659 in 2014. In 2013, annual hepatitis C-related mortality surpassed the total combined number of deaths from 60 other infectious diseases reported to CDC, including HIV, pneumococcal disease, and tuberculosis. Philadelphia surveillance data has also shown that individuals infected with hepatitis B or hepatitis C are dying approximately 10 years earlier than their uninfected age-matched counterparts.

This data follows CDC's *Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer*, released in March, showing that, in contrast to most other cancers in the U.S., liver cancer incidence is increasing at a rapid rate and the rate of deaths due to liver cancer is increasing faster than for any other type of cancer. Hepatitis B and C are major contributing factors to liver cancer. In Philadelphia, 13% and 35% of all individuals diagnosed with liver cancer during 2003 – 2014 had concomitant hepatitis B and hepatitis C infection, respectively.

In Philadelphia, fewer than 50% of the ~50,000 individuals thought to be living with hepatitis C have been screened for their disease, and only half of these have received confirmatory HCV RNA testing. Fewer still have been appropriately linked to care, treated, and cured.

Primary care providers play a crucial role in reversing the trend of illnesses and deaths associated with hepatitis B and C. They are often the first ones to diagnose patients with hepatitis and can link patients to specialists for monitoring and treatment. Complete information about hepatitis screening guidelines can be found here: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/>

This Hepatitis Awareness Month, take advantage of new, locally developed educational resources:

- **Free CME Opportunity.** The Hepatitis C Allies of Philadelphia (HepCAP) coalition is offering a free, one-hour CME training for primary care practices that would like additional knowledge of hepatitis C. Philadelphia hepatitis treatment specialists will review screening guidelines and best practices for linking positive patients to care. To schedule a *Hepatitis C for Primary Care Providers* in-service, email hepcap@healthfederation.org or call 215-246-5212.
- **PDPH Educational Materials.** Download hepatitis informational brochures, posters, and other materials from <https://hip.phila.gov/DiseaseControlGuidance/DiseasesConditions/HepatitisC>. To request hard copies of these materials, contact PDPH's Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator at Alexandra.shirreffs@phila.gov or 215-685-6462.
- **Surveillance Updates.** PDPH uses data collected from providers across the city to take an in-depth look at factors that impact the epidemic. Check out Hepatitis Headlines newsletters and other data highlights at the PDPH's Health Information Portal: <https://hip.phila.gov/DataReports/Hepatitis>.

For more information regarding hepatitis visit: www.phillyhepatitis.org

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Division of Disease Control • 500 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146

215-685-6740 (phone) • 215-686-4514 (after hours) • 215-238-6947 (fax) • www.phila.gov/health/DiseaseControl • hip.phila.gov