



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc  
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS RELEASE PLAN TO ELIMINATE VIRAL HEPATITIS IN NEW YORK CITY BY 2030

*Plan sets forth strategies to reduce new hepatitis C infections by 90%, premature deaths among people with chronic hepatitis B and chronic hepatitis C by 65%, and health inequities related to viral hepatitis*

*Health Department to partner with Hep Free NYC coalition on plan implementation*

**December 27, 2021** – The Health Department today released the [Plan to Eliminate Viral Hepatitis as a Major Public Health Threat in New York City by 2030](#) (Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan), 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.

“We are proud to join our partners in putting forth this bold plan to improve the health and lives of New Yorkers living with hepatitis and prevent future infections,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. “Hepatitis is preventable and treatable. We have to do all we can to reduce inequities and barriers to care.”

In 2017, more than 300,000 people were estimated to be living with hepatitis B and/or C in New York City. Without care and treatment, a quarter of people with hepatitis B or C may progress to serious liver disease, liver cancer, or premature death. It is possible to eliminate hepatitis C through prevention and treatment to cure infection, and to eliminate inequities in health outcomes among people with hepatitis B through vaccination and supporting access to health care.

The Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan is the product of a year-long community planning process during which the Health Department convened key stakeholders through the [Hep Free NYC](#) coalition, a community coalition of clinical and community health providers, researchers, advocates, and people with lived experience of hepatitis B or C. Together, the Health Department and community stakeholders developed strategies spanning systems and policy changes, enhanced clinical infrastructure, training, community outreach, and stigma-free, culturally and linguistically responsive care. The plan also includes progress indicators based on currently available hepatitis B and C program and surveillance data.

The Health Department will assess and report on these indicators to keep community stakeholders informed of New York City's progress toward the plan's goals, including in [Hepatitis A, B, and C Annual Reports](#).

“The Hep Free NYC Coalition deserves special recognition for bringing together community advocates, dedicated public health workers, and expert clinicians over the years, culminating in a new viral hepatitis elimination plan for New York City,” said **Annette Gaudino, Director of Policy Strategy for Treatment Action Group**. “Today marks the long-awaited beginning of the next phase of this exciting collaboration to bring care and treatment to all New Yorkers living with chronic hepatitis B and C.”

“We've made major gains in addressing viral hepatitis in recent years, including supporting more people to access life-saving hepatitis C treatment options,” said **Emma Roberts, Senior Director of National Capacity Building for the National Harm Reduction Coalition**. “However, we must continue to engage New Yorkers at risk for acquiring viral hepatitis and those who need support to navigate health care systems for treatment. The new viral hepatitis elimination plan will help to support this work, including the National Harm Reduction Coalition's Hep C Peer Navigation program.”

“Implementation of a plan to eliminate hepatitis B and C in New York City is a critical step forward,” said **Charles King, CEO of Housing Works**. “It will not be an easy challenge, but we will never accomplish this goal without a deliberate plan and the resources to go with it. Housing Works strongly supports this initiative.”

“Hepatitis B is a major health problem and is a leading cause of liver cancer, yet it is often undiagnosed,” said **Dr. Y-Uyen Le Nguyen, Hepatitis B Program Director at Charles B. Wang Community Health Center**. “According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 67% of persons with hepatitis B do not know they carry the virus. To eliminate hepatitis B, it is important to cast a wide net with universal screening and vaccination.”

The Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan's goals align with global, national, and state elimination plans, including the [New York State Hepatitis C Elimination Plan](#) released last month, but focus strategically on New York City's specific needs and assets related to hepatitis B and C. The plan reflects the Health Department's core value of equity and commitment to implementing anti-racist public health practice. Efforts to eliminate hepatitis B are linked to immigrant and refugee health promotion, particularly for immigrants from Asia and Africa. According to the Health Department's [Health of Asians and Pacific Islanders in New York City](#), released earlier this month, from 2013 to 2015, 61% of people with known race or ethnicity and diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B were Asian. Language barriers, low health literacy, immigration status, and economic hardships commonly hinder access to care for these communities in New York City. While hepatitis C can be cured, many New Yorkers with hepatitis C remain undiagnosed and experience barriers to testing and treatment, leading to suboptimal cure rates and poor health outcomes.

The Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan follows the opening of the nation's first publicly recognized [Overdose Prevention Centers \(OPCs\)](#) in New York City. OPCs offer safe places where people

who use drugs can receive medical care and be connected to treatment and social services. OPCs and other harm reduction interventions that promote safer practices are key strategies to prevent the spread of HIV and hepatitis.

For more information on [Hep Free NYC](#), a community coalition of clinical and community health providers, researchers, advocates, and people with lived experience of hepatitis B and/or C, or to get involved, visit [HepFree.nyc](#).

For more information on hepatitis B or to find a location offering low- to no-cost hepatitis B testing, vaccination, or treatment, call 311 and ask for “hepatitis B” or visit [nyc.gov/health/hepb](#). For more information on hepatitis C or to find a location offering low- to no-cost hepatitis C testing or treatment, call 311 and ask for “hepatitis C” or visit [nyc.gov/health/hepc](#).

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