



Viral Hepatitis Newsletter

August 2023

Spotlight

Overdose Awareness Day

Every Aug. 31 is International Overdose Awareness Day, the world's largest annual campaign to end overdoses. This year's theme acknowledges people in our community who are affected by overdose and the grief of family and friends. Overdose Awareness Day is a time for remembrance, and a time to act.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Transmission and Treatment

The Connection Between Hepatitis C and Injecting Drugs

Hepatitis C virus is transmitted through blood-to-blood contact, and is the most common bloodborne pathogen. Blood transmissions can happen when a person comes into contact with contaminated items. Hepatitis C at room temperature can survive outside the body in patches of dried blood for several weeks. In the United States, the majority of people who become infected with hepatitis C are those who share needles or other equipment that is used to inject drugs.

50%

of persons who inject drugs have been exposed to hepatitis C

Shiffman, M. L. (2018). The next wave of hepatitis C virus: The epidemic of intravenous drug use. *Liver International*, 38, 34–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/iv.13647>

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices (ACIP) **recommend that people who use or inject drugs should be vaccinated against hepatitis A and B.** Those who inject drugs should be tested regularly for hepatitis B and hepatitis C, as long as the risk factor of injecting drugs continues.

Hepatitis C Treatment for Those with Substance Use Disorder

The American Association of the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) and the Infectious Diseases Society of America (ISDA) released their updated **hepatitis C guidance** in 2019. The hepatitis C guidance panel strongly recommends antiviral treatment for hepatitis C for all adults with acute and chronic hepatitis C. This recommendation includes persons who have ongoing substance use.

Updates

Harm Reduction Programs

Harm reduction is a public health principle used to decrease the harm that is associated with various human behaviors. Harm reduction includes a variety of practices, ranging from wearing a seatbelt, to applying sunscreen, to providing new syringes or other materials to people who inject substances.

Syringe service programs are locations where a person who injects substances can receive new, sterile syringes and other supplies that they need to safely inject substances, and referrals to additional health and social services. According to the CDC, syringe services programs are associated with an estimated 50% reduction in HIV and hepatitis C virus incidences.

To learn more about harm reduction in Indiana [CLICK THIS LINK](#).

IDOH Overdose Prevention Initiatives

The Indiana Department of Health, Division of Trauma and Injury Prevention works to develop, implement and provide oversight of statewide comprehensive trauma care systems that prevent injuries, save lives and improve the care and outcomes of trauma patients. The Division's Drug and Overdose Prevention (DOP) team implements strategies that use data to inform prevention activities, including:

- Managing naloxone training and distribution
- Implementing Peer Recovery Coach program
- Connecting individuals to care
- Hosting harm reduction training for first responders
- Partnering with local coroners to gather data
- Managing OptIN, a statewide naloxone dispensary registry

The DOP team collaborates with other IDOH divisions and local programs to support additional prevention initiatives. These partnerships include, but are not limited to, IDOH Fatality Review and Prevention Division, IDOH HIV/STI/Viral Hepatitis Division, Indiana Communities Advancing Recovery Efforts (IN CAREs), Indiana Peer Education Program (INPEP) and Enhancing Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) to provide services on:

- Hepatitis C
- Integrated Pain Management
- LGBTQ+ Health
- Suicide and Overdose Fatality Review
- Syringe Service Programs
- Non-Syringe harm reduction services and more

To learn more about the Division of Trauma and Injury Prevention's work at the Indiana Department of Health [CLICK THIS LINK](#).



Educational Resources

Hepatitis C ECHO Trainings

Extension for Community Healthcare Outcome (ECHO) is a collaborative program that uses technology to provide case-based learning and improve access to high-quality hepatitis B and C treatment. On the online platform, participants connect to specialists, participate in discussions and share knowledge with others.

The hepatitis C ECHO program meets online on the first and third Thursday each month from 12:30 to 2 p.m.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

IN-HAMP

Indiana Hepatitis Academic Mentorship Program (IN-HAMP) is a medical education training program for clinicians that are new to treating hepatitis C. The IN-HAMP program includes:

- Two 1.5-hour long hepatitis C ECHO session,
- Cycle 1 training with preparation for clinicians to treat individuals living with hepatitis C, and
- Cycle 2 training on covers advanced topics in hepatitis C care.

If you are a clinician interested in learning more about IN-HAMP, email inhamp@iu.edu or enroll in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2. The next Cycle 1 training will take place on Thursday, September 7, 2023. At the conclusion of the training, clinicians will have the tools and education to begin treating hepatitis C immediately.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Overdose Awareness Events

- Aug. 27:** Overdose Awareness Day, Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis from 6 to 8 p.m.
- Aug. 31:** FED UP Rally, Austin City Hall in Austin at 5:30 p.m.
SAVE A LIFE Training in Morgan County
- Aug. 16:** Recovery Fair, Franklin Park and Rec Center in Franklin from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

