



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF

HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Oxiris Barbot, MD

*Commissioner*

January 2019

Dear Colleague:

People living with HIV and hepatitis C infection are at high risk for developing serious liver disease and liver cancer. Fortunately, antiviral medications can cure hepatitis C infection in the majority of patients living with HIV in 8 to 12 weeks with few side effects. Among 59,783 HIV-positive persons residing and receiving care in NYC in 2017, 12% had ever had an RNA-positive result reported for hepatitis C; of those, only 68% had initiated hepatitis C treatment.

The medical community has an unprecedented opportunity to prevent cirrhosis, end-stage liver disease, liver cancer, and death from hepatitis C infection through early identification and treatment.

To improve health outcomes of persons with HIV, the NYC Health Department recommends that providers:

1. **Test all HIV-positive individuals for hepatitis C at intake into care.** If there is no record of previous hepatitis C testing, test with antibody and reflex to RNA. If there is a history of hepatitis C infection, test for the presence of hepatitis C RNA.
2. **Retest HIV-positive individuals with ongoing risk for hepatitis C annually.** Individuals at risk include people who use drugs and men who have sex with men.
3. **Treat all co-infected patients for hepatitis C.** With support, almost all people can successfully complete hepatitis C treatment, including those who are actively using drugs or alcohol and those with untreated HIV.

There are many programs that specialize in treatment for people who use drugs and provide intensive supportive services such as directly observed therapy (DOT) throughout NYC. Contact [Hep@health.nyc.gov](mailto:Hep@health.nyc.gov) or call our Hepatitis Navigation Warm-line (917) 890-0834 for assistance helping your patients get treated and cured.

The Health Department encourages all infectious disease and primary care providers to learn how to treat hepatitis C infection. Review the resources below for information about free trainings available for clinical and allied health providers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Demetre Daskalakis'.

Demetre Daskalakis, MD, MPH  
Deputy Commissioner, Division of Disease Control

## Resources

### Clinical guidance

- [American Association for the Study of Liver Disease \(AASLD\) and Infectious Disease Society of America \(IDSA\)](#): clinical guidelines for the identification and treatment of hepatitis C in people living with HIV
- [NYS AIDS Institute](#): clinical guidelines for the treatment of hepatitis C, HIV, and substance use
- [Diagnosing and Managing Hepatitis C](#): NYC Health Department, *City Health Information*, February 2018
- [AIDS Info](#): Guidelines for the use of antiretroviral agents in adults and adolescents living with HIV

### Clinical training

- [Empire Liver Foundation](#): free CME/CNE/CEU live webinar hepatitis clinical training series and half-day preceptorship in a NYC liver clinic several times a year
- [Bridge HCV](#): free CME live training for clinical providers in treating hepatitis C in people who use drugs and alcohol
- [Clinical Education Initiative \(CEI\)](#): free CME HIV and hepatitis C training and a case consultation hotline
- [AIDS Education and Training Center Program \(AETC\)](#): free clinical training, HIV and hepatitis C preceptorship opportunities, and clinical support tools
- [Clinical Care Options](#): free CME online hepatitis trainings

### Patient and provider education materials and support

- [NYC Department of Health](#) provides free patient and provider education materials
- The Health Department provides training, resources, and support to build the capacity of health care facilities to prevent manage and treat hepatitis B and C; to learn more, contact [Hep@health.nyc.gov](mailto:Hep@health.nyc.gov)