

2026 Hep Free NYC Advocacy Toolkit

Advocating for Local and State Funding for Viral Hepatitis Community Programs in NYC

Hep Free NYC Advocacy Committee

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HEP FREE .NYC

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About the 2026 Hep Free NYC Advocacy Toolkit

Hep Free NYC is a network of community health organizations and advocates working to eliminate hepatitis B and C in NYC. Hep Free NYC includes the NYC Hep B Coalition and Hep C NY Coalition.



Hep Free NYC members participate in annual advocacy to local and state legislators to request funding and inform policy on viral hepatitis prevention, care, and treatment in New York.

The Hep Free Advocacy Committee organizes city and statewide advocacy events and offers support and resources to community members who want to join this effort which includes: scripts, trainings, office hours, and an advocacy calendar. The committee is led by Meg Chappell, MPH (Empire Liver Foundation) and Ellie Goldfarb, MPH (Housing Works).

The Hep Free NYC Advocacy Toolkit offers step-by-step guidance for successfully advocating to elected officials through phone zaps, policy platform development, an educational briefing, legislative visits, and testimonies at committee hearings. Click on the purple links for a deeper dive into each step.

Communications about upcoming trainings and events are made via the Hep Free NYC email list. Subscribe to the email list.
Or e-mail nychepfree@gmail.com with any questions.

2026–2027 Hep Free NYC Advocacy Calendar

This Hep Free NYC advocacy calendar offers a timeline of how to prepare yourself for each part of the advocacy season. A more detailed description of each quarter is provided on the next page. You can use this timeline to guide effective communication with policy makers on viral hepatitis throughout the year.

SEP TO NOV 2026	NOV 2026 TO JAN 2027	FEB TO MAR 2027	APR TO JUN 2027
Learn about Hep Free NYC advocacy	**Prepare advocacy requests**	**Attend advocacy events**	**Final outreach and monitoring**
Learn how to advocate for viral hepatitis funding and policies during Hep Free NYC trainings	Prepare FY2028 NYC Council funding application Contribute to FY2028 NYS Hep C Policy Platform Begin outreach to your elected representatives	Educate policymakers during Hep Free NYC advocacy events in NYC and Albany Provide testimony during committee hearings	Participate in Hep Free NYC phone zaps to elected officials Monitor budget decisions

2026–2027 Hep Free NYC Advocacy Calendar

Timeline	Advocacy Action Steps	
	New York City Council (hepatitis B and C)	**New York State Legislature** (hepatitis C)
SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER 2026 **Learn about Hep Free NYC advocacy** (see page 6 for more info)	Learn about viral hepatitis advocacy during Hep Free NYC and partner trainings. Identify your elected representatives on the NYC Council and State Legislature.	
NOVEMBER 2026–JANUARY 2027 **Prepare advocacy requests** (see page 7 for more info)	Prepare NYC Council discretionary funding application for February 2027 submission.	Participate in the Hep C NY Coalition fall 2026 meeting to draft legislative priorities. Monitor state budget proposals.
	Begin outreach to your elected representatives	
FEBRUARY–MARCH 2027 **Attend advocacy events** (see page 9 for more info)	Invite NYC Council Members to and attend the NYC Council Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative educational briefing in February 2027.	Join coalition partners at the Hep C NY Legislative Education Day in Albany in January 2027.
	Provide testimony at NYC Council committee hearings in March 2027, providing neighborhood public health data and organizational experiences to justify funding needs.	
APRIL–JUNE 2027 **Outreach and monitoring** (see page 11 for more info)	Continue outreach to elected officials. For example, schedule meetings to discuss viral hepatitis priorities, advocacy calls (phone zaps), and invite elected officials to the May 2027 Hepatitis Awareness Day Steps of City Hall Press Event and other community gatherings.	
	Monitor NYC Council budget decisions	Monitor state budget decisions.

Learn About Hep Free NYC Advocacy

SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER 2026

Take the following advocacy actions between September and November 2026 to help expand and sustain services and resources to address hepatitis B and C.

Learn about viral hepatitis community programs

- ☐ Take the Hepatitis C Patient Navigation training (Part I) (register for October training) to increase ability to navigate clients through hepatitis C testing, care, treatment and prevention.
- ☐ Take the Hepatitis C Patient Navigation training (Part II) (register for November training) to enhance skills to better navigate community members safely through the care cascade.
- ☐ Browse the Hep Free.NYC website to learn about NYC viral hepatitis community programs and past advocacy efforts.
- ☐ Browse the National Harm Reduction Coalition's hepatitis C patient navigation course.

Learn how to effectively advocate in New York

Every New Yorker is represented by one NYC Council member, one New York State Senator and one State Assembly Member.

- ☐ Learn who your elected officials are (see the NYC Council and NY State Legislature member directories).
- ☐ Become familiar with Hep Free NYC's template agenda for legislative visits and tips for effective conversations with policymakers.
- ☐ View the NYC Council Calendar and NYS Legislative Calendar (coming soon).

Meet Hep Free NYC coalition members

Meet other coalition members and learn about their work and past advocacy efforts.

- ☐ Attend the NYC Hep B Coalition and Hep C NY quarterly meetings. Meeting invites are sent out via the Hep Free NYC email list.
- ☐ Review Hep Free NYC meeting highlights, which archive past presentations on NYC viral hepatitis data, community health programs, and current policy priorities.

Prepare Advocacy Requests

NOVEMBER 2026–JANUARY 2027

Take the following advocacy actions between November 2026 and January 2027 to help expand and sustain services and resources to address hepatitis B and C.

Apply for FY2028 NYC Council discretionary funding

Through its Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative, NYC Council has funded clinical education and patient and peer navigation services for people with hepatitis B and C in NYC since 2014. In FY2027, 30 community health organizations received funding.

- ☐ Read the NYC Council Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative (VHPI) History and FY2027 VHPI Funding Request.

The application for FY2028 NYC Council Discretionary Funding will be posted in early January 2027. The deadline is in **mid-February 2027**.

- ☐ Access the application on the NYC Council Budget website (coming soon).
- ☐ Learn the requirements by watching the Introduction to Funding webinar (coming soon).
- ☐ Read Hep Free NYC's recommendations for building a strong NYC Council discretionary funding application.
- ☐ Get technical assistance by attending Hep Free NYC Advocacy office hours in January 2027.

Prepare NY State hepatitis C legislative asks

The Hep C NY Coalition drafts legislative and budget priorities to inform state-level policymaking each year.

- ☐ Participate in the January 2027 Advocacy 101 interactive session on mobilizing communities for viral hepatitis advocacy (see last year's slides and register for the training).
- ☐ Review the coalition's FY2027 NYS Budget and Policy Priorities and policy one-pagers.
- ☐ Review the NYS Hepatitis C Elimination Plan.
- ☐ Attend the coalition's fall 2027 working group meeting to inform FY2028 policy priorities.
- ☐ Watch the 2027 State of the State for NYS executive budget proposal in January 2027.

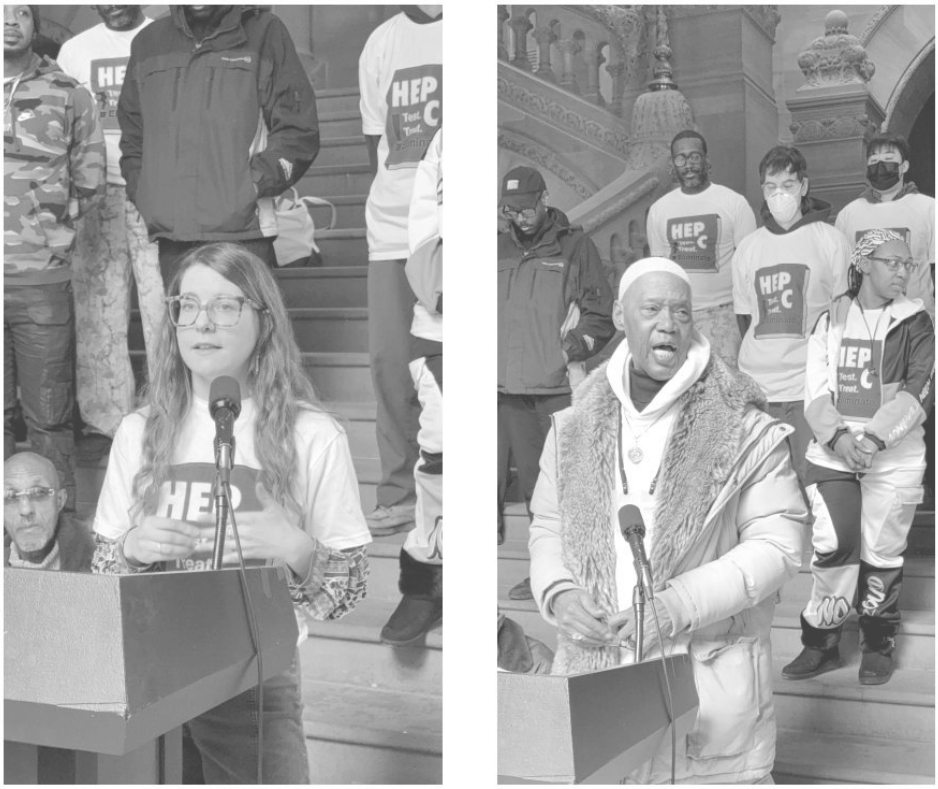
☐ Sign up and prepare for the February 2027 Hepatitis C Legislative Action Day using Hep Free NYC's template agenda for legislative visits, tips for effective conversations with policymakers, and follow-up email template.

Begin outreach to elected representatives

Make calls and schedule meetings with your elected representatives so that they can hear about hepatitis B and C in their districts and learn about policy and funding needs.

☐ Use Hep Free NYC email templates to introduce your organization and work in viral hepatitis.

☐ Read Hep Free NYC's template agenda for legislative visits and tips for effective conversations with policymakers to help prepare.



Advocates at the February 3rd, 2026 Hepatitis C NY Coalition Legislative Education Day in Albany, NY

Educate Policymakers During Advocacy Events

FEBRUARY–MARCH 2027

Take the following advocacy actions between February and March 2027. In-person advocacy is optimal during early spring when New York City and State budgets are being deliberated before the April State budget deadline.

Advocate to New York City Council and State legislators during scheduled Hep Free NYC advocacy events

At least one organizational representative should be present at the two scheduled Hep Free NYC advocacy events.



For New York City Council:

- ☐ Invite your NYC Council member to the February 2027 NYC Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative Educational Briefing using the Hep Free NYC advocacy email templates. (See recap of the February 2026 briefing for reference.)
- ☐ Attach the NYC Council Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative Overview and Rates of Hepatitis B and C by NYC Council District in the email invitation.
- ☐ Attend the educational briefing to advocate directly with NYC Council members.

For New York State Legislature:

- ☐ Attend the Winter 2027 NYS Hepatitis C Coalition Legislative Action Day in Albany with organizations and advocates from across the state.
- ☐ Become familiar with the 2026–2027 Hep C Elimination Policy Platform (coming soon).
- ☐ Plan your meeting using Hep Free NYC's template agenda for legislative visits, tips for effective conversations with policymakers, and follow-up email template.

Testify during committee hearings

Policymakers engage in committee hearings as part of the budget process. Public testimony, written or oral, is encouraged at committee hearings. Testimonies of personal experiences are a compelling way to educate policymakers on how viral hepatitis community programs help their constituents.

- ☐ Use the Hep Free NYC outline for written or oral testimony to help draft your testimony.
- ☐ Use information from the 2030 NYC Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan, NYS Hepatitis B and C Annual Report, 2024 and NYC Hepatitis A, B and C Annual Report, 2024 to support your testimony.

> *"Hepatitis C is a serious issue that can lead to liver damage, cancer, and death. With 86,000 New Yorkers living with hepatitis C, awareness and access to testing, treatment, and care are crucial. As a Council Member, I'm committed to ensuring adequate funding for organizations and continuing the important work started by my predecessor, Corey Johnson, in establishing the Viral Hepatitis Initiative. Let's work together to fight this disease and protect our communities."*
>
> – Former NYC Council Member Erik Bottcher (District 3), during the 2024 New York City Council Educational Briefing on Viral Hepatitis



Advocates testifying on March 21, 2024 at NYC city hall

Final Outreach and Monitoring

APRIL–JUNE 2027

Take the following advocacy actions between April and June 2027. Final outreach in the remainder of the budget season keeps your funding/policy requests top of mind for busy policymakers. It also offers an opportunity to provide follow-up or new information since the last advocacy outreach.

Maintain ongoing outreach by phone and email

- ☐ Join Hep Free NYC phone zaps to make advocacy calls to legislators. Email invites will be sent via the Hep Free NYC email list.
- ☐ Use Hep Free NYC advocacy email templates to send final outreach emails to New York City Council members and state legislators.

Monitor New York State & NYC Council budget announcements

- ☐ Monitor the final state budget, due to be released on **April 1, 2027**. An enacted budget is agreed on by the Governor, Senate, and Assembly and designates state funding for the next fiscal year. Look for the hepatitis B and C related budget items.
- ☐ Monitor the release of Schedule C: Adopted Expense Budget Adjustment Summary for NYC Council Discretionary Funding, which designates NYC Council funding for the next fiscal year and is released annually on **June 30th.** Look for awardees and amounts listed for the Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative.

Join Hepatitis Awareness Month events

- ☐ Invite elected representatives to attend Hepatitis Awareness Month events in New York City. Events will be listed on the Hep Free NYC events calendar.
- ☐ Join Hep Free NYC's annual Steps of City Hall Press Event in May 2027 (see 2026 recap for reference).

Hep Free NYC Advocacy Resource List

The following lists the advocacy resources shared in this toolkit.

Hep Free NYC coalition resources

- ☐ Hep Free NYC email list subscription form, events calendar and advocacy email archive

Hep Free NYC tips for communicating with NYC/NYS policymakers

- ☐ Advocacy 101 training slides (2025)
- ☐ Advocacy email templates and visit follow-up email template
- ☐ Template agenda for legislative visits
- ☐ Tips for effective conversations with policymakers
- ☐ Outline for written or oral testimony

New York City Council-specific resources

- ☐ NYC Council Viral Hepatitis Prevention Initiative (VHPI) History
- ☐ FY2027 VHPI Funding Request
- ☐ Introduction to Funding webinar
- ☐ Hep Free NYC recommendations for building a strong NY City Council discretionary funding application
- ☐ 2030 NYC Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan
- ☐ NYC Hepatitis A, B and C Annual Report, 2024
- ☐ Rates of Hepatitis B & C by City Council District
- ☐ NYC Council Calendar and member directory

New York State Legislature-specific resources

- ☐ 2026–2027 Hep C Elimination Policy Platform (coming soon)
- ☐ NYS Hepatitis C Coalition FY2027 Budget and Policy Priorities
- ☐ NYS Hepatitis C Coalition FY2027 policy one-pagers
- ☐ NYS Hepatitis C Elimination Plan
- ☐ NYS Hepatitis B and C Annual Report, 2024
- ☐ NY State Legislative Session Calendar (coming soon) and member directory