

NATIONAL VIRAL HEPATITIS ROUNDTABLE – 2018 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR) is the leading national advocacy organization focused on eliminating hepatitis B and C and providing educational tools and resources to link individuals living with viral hepatitis to testing and care. Below is a compilation of selected advocacy efforts for 2018:

PROGRAM AND POLICY INITIATIVES

- **2019 Hepatitis C Patient Summit:** NVHR has organized its first national [patient summit](#) for early 2019, entitled “**Hepatitis C Patients-We Will Be Heard**” which will bring together 100 patients recently cured or currently living with HCV with an emphasis on those who have not had experience engaging in other advocacy programs. By establishing a platform for 100 hepatitis C patients to engage in dialogue, NVHR will work with participants to develop shared goals as well as address the need for greater patient engagement and leadership to ensure the delivery of high quality of care for patients diagnosed with hepatitis C. To ensure the demographics of attendees reflect the demographics of the disease’s epidemic, the patient summit will prioritize recruitment of individuals from disproportionately impacted and marginalized communities.
- **Hepatitis C Project Booster Mini Grants:** NVHR awarded four \$10,000 NVHR Hepatitis C Project Booster Mini Grants in 2018 that are intended to enhance the capacity of NVHR member organizations to conduct hepatitis C education, testing, and linkage to care in their local communities and then disseminate those best practices nationally. In an effort to encourage our partners to seek grant funding and to help make the writing process less overwhelming, NVHR also developed a [grant writing tip sheet](#). This year’s recipients are conducting one-year projects from June 1, 2018 - May 31, 2019:
 - Health Care for the Homeless, Inc. (Baltimore, Maryland)
 - Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction (Eureka, California)
 - Department of Family Medicine, Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center (New York, New York)
 - Prevention Point Philadelphia (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)
- **“Hepatitis C: The State of Medicaid Access” Project:** Following the launch of the [“Hepatitis C: The State of Medicaid Access 2017 National Summary Report”](#) in October of 2017, NVHR continues to actively monitor the treatment access landscape and update report cards for the jurisdictions that have changed their restrictions and will continue to make changes as states modify their Medicaid requirements. As a result of continued state advocacy, public pressure, media, and legislation, the following 20 jurisdictions have improved access and changed their coverage restrictions following the release of NVHR/CHLPI report: Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington D.C. Iowa, Kansas and Michigan are also considering reducing their restrictions. NVHR provides continuous updates and alerts on new developments to members and partners and conducts quarterly advocate conference calls focused on achievements of the project.
- **“More than Tested, Empowered - Overcoming Barriers to HCV Care” Project:** NVHR has partnered with the Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition (AHRC), the People's Harm Reduction Alliance (PHRA), and the Urban Survivors Union (USU) on an innovative [project](#) to address the most significant personal and

systemic barriers to hepatitis C care faced by people who use drugs, including stigma. The project addresses barriers at three points along the hepatitis C cascade by educating patients, primary care providers, and specialty providers by sharing findings, materials, and lessons learned throughout the year. In 2018, the project produced two education webinars about stigma as a barrier to hepatitis C services among people who use drugs. Each organization shared their experiences addressing stigma by engaging current substance users and healthcare providers to develop strategies and impactful solutions.

- **“Hepatitis C – It’s About More than Liver Disease” Project:** In an effort to increase awareness among the healthcare and patient communities about the extrahepatic manifestations (EHMs) associated with chronic hepatitis C, NVHR launched a [series of fact sheets](#) about chronic hepatitis C-related health conditions that occur outside of the liver, which can impact up to 74 percent of individuals infected with hepatitis C. NVHR also hosted a webinar with clinical and patient experts to promote dialogue between partners about the need for a broader approach to addressing hepatitis c.
- **Coalition-Building, Outreach, Relationships, Education (CORE) Program:** In 2018, NVHR has strengthened and expanded partnerships with healthcare providers, professional associations, clinics, and other health care systems to share best practices, for expanding hepatitis C testing among Baby Boomers, individuals at risk for hepatitis C, and disproportionately impacted communities. Currently, NVHR oversees communications for two clinician working groups (one with a focus on hepatitis C advocacy within state Medicaid programs and another on Telehealth. NVHR has been a source of crucial educational resources and collateral for the national hepatitis community, advocates, and patients by providing updated information about the need for hepatitis C testing and linkage to care for individuals most at-risk.

TARGETED MEDIA COVERAGE

NVHR has consistently driven media coverage around its policy and program priorities in 2018 in national and local outlets throughout the U.S. NVHR has garnered media attention for our State of Hep C project and has generated media interest for the “Hepatitis C – It’s About More Than Liver Disease” project, work to promote more hepatitis C screenings of pregnant women, concerns about criminalization of hepatitis C, and efforts to show the relationship between increased opioid use and spread of the hepatitis C virus. NVHR also worked with Stateline reporter Michael Ollove to analyze the trend at the state-level of Medicaid programs reducing restrictions on hepatitis C treatment, while discriminatory restrictions on care exist and 13 states still criminalize transmission of the disease.

- October 29, 2018: [“Health Groups upgrade R.I. hepatitis C Medicaid access to ‘A-’](#)” by Rob Borkowski, *Providence Business News*
- September 25, 2018: [“Courts Force States to Provide Costly Hep C Treatment”](#) by Michael Ollove, *Stateline*
- August 1, 2018: [“The fight to eliminate hepatitis C in Philly: A Q&A with Stacey Trooskin,”](#) *Penn Today (University of Pennsylvania)*
- July 20, 2018: [“Patients get sicker as Texas refuses to cure them of deadly hepatitis C”](#) by Allie Morris, *San Antonio Express-News*
- June 27, 2018: [“Not all Californians can get life-saving hepatitis C treatment. Governor’s budget aims to fix”](#) by Hannah Holzer, *Sacramento Bee*

- May 23, 2018: [“With highest hepatitis C mortality rate in U.S., Oregon expands access to life-saving drugs”](#) by Cat Wise in *PBS News Hour*
- April 30, 2018: [“Injection drug use and opioid epidemic drives hepatitis C infections”](#) by Tony Tugh, *McClatchy DC Bureau*
- April 25, 2018: [“Infectious disease expert briefs Congress on needle exchange”](#) by Wendy Holdren, *Register-Herald*
- April 22, 2018: [“Transmitting HIV is a Crime in Most States. Is HCV Next?”](#) by Sonny Salzman, *MedPage Today*
- March 22, 2018: [“A serious liver ailment is stalking Kentucky’s children. But they aren’t getting care”](#) by Laura Ungar, *Louisville Courier Journal*
- March 5, 2018: [“Advocacy in Action”](#) by Casey Halter, *Hep Mag*
- February 20, 2018: [“It’s criminal what Illinois is doing to Medicaid patients with hepatitis C”](#) by Oluwatoyin Adeyemi, Andrew Aronsohn, Basmattee Boodram, Daniel Johnson and Mai Tuyet Pho, *Crain’s Chicago Business*
- February 15, 2018: [“ACLU sues Kansas over Hep C drug denials for Medicaid patients”](#) by Andy Marso, *The Kansas City Star*
- February 8, 2018: [“Montana needs to rethink hepatitis policy,”](#) *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*
- February 8, 2018: [“Medicaid Skimps on Hepatitis C Treatment in Many States”](#) by Liz Highleyman, *MedPage Today*
- January 25, 2018: [“Study: Montana program fails hepatitis C patients”](#) by Katheryn Houghton, *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*
- January 23, 2018: [“States Face Costly Conundrum: How To Treat Inmates With Hepatitis C”](#) by Alex Smith, *The Washington Post*
- January 19, 2018: [“The Push to Inform the Many Dangerous Effects of HCV”](#) by Gail Connor Roche, *MD Magazine*
- January 19, 2018: [“Missouri Faces Costly Dilemma: How To Treat Inmates With Hepatitis C?”](#) by Alex Smith, *NPR*
- January 13, 2018: [“Early HCV Identification, Follow-up Key to Reducing Risk in Pregnancy”](#) by Gail Connor Roche, *MD Magazine*

PROACTIVE PRESS OUTREACH

NVHR regularly published press releases throughout 2018 to further its policy agenda, focusing primarily on access to hepatitis C treatments for Medicaid patients, viral hepatitis criminalization laws, and federal opioid legislation.

- October 24, 2018: [NVHR Statement on Signing of Bipartisan Legislation to Combat the Opioid Crisis and Opioid Related Infectious Diseases](#)
- September 12, 2018: [NVHR Statement on the Passage of the Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018](#)

- August 22, 2018: [Arkansas Receives ‘F’ in Harvard Law School & NVHR Report Card Project Grading Medicaid Programs for Discriminatory Hepatitis C Treatment Restrictions](#)
- August 21, 2018: [The Center for HIV Law and Policy, Harm Reduction Coalition, and the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable Release Comprehensive New Fact Sheet on Viral Hepatitis Criminalization in the United States](#)
- August 17, 2018: [South Dakota Receives ‘F’ in Harvard Law School & NVHR Report Card Project Grading Medicaid Programs for Discriminatory Hepatitis C Treatment Restrictions](#)
- August 16, 2018: [Louisiana Medicaid Program Improves Hepatitis C Treatment Access for Some Patients, But More Progress is Needed to Ensure Access to a Cure for Those Who Need It](#)
- May 25, 2018: [NVHR Applauds New AASLD and IDSA Guidelines for Hepatitis C Screening and Treatment for At-Risk Populations](#)
- May 1, 2018: [NVHR Calls for Increased Recognition of Hepatitis C as a Systemic Health Condition as Part of ‘Hepatitis Awareness Month’](#)
- March 27, 2018: [NVHR Urges Congress to Pass the Eliminating Opioid-Related Infectious Diseases Act](#)
- January 25, 2018: [Montana Receives ‘F’ in New Harvard Law School & NVHR Report Card Project Grading Medicaid Programs for Discriminatory Hepatitis C Treatment Restrictions](#)

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP/OPINION COLUMNS

In 2018, NVHR published targeted opinion pieces in select, national outlets to complement its earned media coverage. To highlight NVHR’s advocacy campaign around the impact of the opioid epidemic, NVHR published an op-ed about the link between the opioid epidemic and the increasing rates of hepatitis C infections for *Morning Consult*, a Washington D.C.-based outlet, urging the U.S. Senate to pass the Eliminating Opioid Related Infectious Diseases Act of 2018. Other published work from 2018 has focused on stigma around hepatitis C and individuals who use drugs.

- August 24, 2018: [“It’s Time for Congress to Get Serious About Hepatitis and the Opioid Epidemic”](#) by Tina Broder in *Morning Consult*
- July 25, 2018: [“Fighting Stigma to Improve Access to Hepatitis C Care for Substance Users”](#) by NVHR in *Hep Mag*
- March 14, 2018: [“NVHR’s Response to the Hidden Casualties of the Opioid Epidemic”](#) by NVHR in *Hep Mag*
- January 16, 2018: [“Injustice in Health Care”](#) by Elizabeth Paukstis in *Hep Mag*

EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS

NVHR has hosted eleven webinars in 2018 in collaboration with partners, covering a variety of topics related to hepatitis B and C, including: stigma around substance use and viral hepatitis, the link between the rise of viral hepatitis rates and the opioid epidemic, and information about NVHR’s programs and advocacy efforts.

- November 29, 2018: [“Strategies to Eliminate HCV in Veterans” Webinar](#), in collaboration with the Veterans Healthcare Administration (VHA) and local agencies that serve vulnerable Veteran populations
- October 4, 2018: [“Punishment is Not a Public Health Strategy” Webinar](#), in collaboration with the Center for HIV Law and Policy and the Harm Reduction Coalition
- August 8, 2018: [“More than Tested, Empowered” Webinar](#), in collaboration with the Urban Survivor's Union, the People's Harm Reduction Alliance, and the Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition
- June 28, 2018: [“Hepatitis C: The State of Medicaid Access” Webinar](#), in collaboration with the Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation (CHLPI)
- May 21, 2018: [“\\$10K Goes A Long Way to Address Hepatitis C” Webinar #2](#), in collaboration with the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses Foundation, BOOM!Health, North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition, and Roots Community Health Center
- May 15, 2018: [“\\$10K Goes A Long Way to Address Hepatitis C” Webinar](#), in collaboration with the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, Centerforce, and The Community Health Outreach Work to Prevent AIDS Project (CHOW Project)
- May 2, 2018: [“It’s About More Than Liver Disease” Webinar](#)
- April 19, 2018: [“NOHep Campaign” Webinar](#), in collaboration with Hep B United and the World Hepatitis Alliance
- March 29, 2018: [“Hepatitis Advocacy: Understanding Federal Appropriations” Webinar](#), in collaboration with Hep B United and NASTAD
- March 8, 2018: [“Hidden Casualties: National Partners’ Response to the Opioid Epidemic and Infectious Diseases” Webinar](#), in collaboration with HHS
- February 6, 2018: [“More than Tested, Cured – Overcoming Barriers to HCV Care” Webinar](#), in collaboration with the Urban Survivor's Union, the People's Harm Reduction Alliance, and the Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition

ADVOCACY AND EDUCATIONAL COLLATERAL

In 2018, NVHR developed a series of new fact sheets to be used for education and advocacy in local communities. As part of the “Hepatitis C – It’s About More Than Liver Disease” project, NVHR created a series of five comprehensive fact sheets about health effects outside of the liver causes by chronic hepatitis C. In October of 2018, NVHR redesigned the organization’s one-pager.

- October 29, 2018: [“Expanding Hepatitis C Treatment Among People Who Inject Drugs”](#)
- October 23, 2018: [“The Case for Universal Hepatitis C Screening of Pregnant Women”](#)
- October 12, 2018: [“National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable One-Pager”](#)
- August 21, 2018: [“Punishment is Not a Public Health Strategy: The Criminalization of Viral Hepatitis”](#)
- May 1, 2018: [“Hepatitis C – It’s About More Than Liver Disease”](#) project
 - [Health Effects of Hepatitis C Outside of the Liver](#)

- [Mixed Cryoglobulinemia, Kidney Disease, and B-Cell Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma](#)
- [Fatigue, Depression, and Chronic Pain](#)
- [Diabetes and Heart Disease](#)
- [Skin Conditions Related to Hepatitis C Infection](#)
- April 23, 2018: "[Elimination of Hepatitis B and C: A National Strategy](#)"

COMMUNITY SIGN-ON LETTERS

- September 2018: [Support for the Vietnam Era Veterans Hepatitis C Testing Enhancement Act \(H.R. 5922\)](#)
- September 2018: [Drug Policy Coalition Urges US Congress to Oppose Inclusion of the Stop the Importation and Trafficking of Scheduled Analogues \(SITSA\) \(H.R. 2851/S. 1327\) Act in the House \(H.R. 6\) and Senate Opioid Package \(S. 2680\)](#)
- June 22, 2018: [Hepatitis Community Sign-On to Ensure Equal Time and Opportunity for Both Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS Community Contribution Regarding HHS's Plan to Update Both the National Viral Hepatitis Action Plan and the National HIV/AIDS Strategy](#)
- May 8, 2018: Letter Encouraging Texas Medicaid to Reconsider Current Prior Authorization Policies for Hepatitis C Treatment
- May 3, 2018: [Letter Urging HHS to Ensure All Jurisdictions Open Access to Hepatitis C Treatment for Medicaid Beneficiaries](#)
- April 17, 2018: [Letter of Organization Support for the Health Equity and Accountability Act \(HEAA\)](#)
- April 13, 2018: [Senate FY19 Hepatitis Letter](#)
- April 13, 2018: [Senate FY19 Hirono-Young-Cassidy-Hassan Hepatitis Letter](#)
- March 19, 2018: [House FY 19 Hepatitis Letter](#)
- March 19, 2018: Support for Opioid Related Infectious Diseases Act

EVENT PARTICIPATION

- November 14, 2018: "[The Hidden Global Hepatitis B Epidemic](#)" Presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting in San Diego, California
- November 13, 2018: "[More than Tested, Cured: A Pilot Project to Reduce Hepatitis C Among Individuals who use Drugs](#)" Presentation at the American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting in San Diego, California
- November 1, 2018: Convening on Viral Hepatitis Criminalization Laws in Louisville, Kentucky
- October 23, 2018: "Hepatitis C Prevention, Management and Treatment in Correctional Settings" Presentation at the National Correctional Health Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada

- October 18, 2018: “Engaging Active Drug Users about Hep C Testing” Workshop at the Harm Reduction Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana
- July 28, 2018: C is for Cure: A WaterFire Lighting for RI Defeats Hep C in Providence, Rhode Island
- July 24, 2018: Hep B United Summit and Advocacy Day in Washington, DC
- July 11, 2018: “[Building Political Partners for HCV Elimination](#)” Presentation at the national HCV Elimination Collaborative
- May 18, 2018: “[The Intersection of Opioids and Viral Hepatitis – A Public Health Crisis](#)” Roundtable
- April 25, 2018: [Community Access National Network Roundtable](#), in collaboration with the ADAP Advocacy Association
- April 25, 2018: 2018 Policy Meeting with the Hepatitis Appropriations Partnership (HAP) and Hep B United.
- April 24, 2018: “Proposed Strategy to Eliminate Hepatitis B and C” Briefing, in collaboration with NASTAD and Hep B United
- April 23, 2018: “[Enhancing Patient-Centered Care Models to Serve Vulnerable Populations at Risk for and Living with HCV](#)” Panel at SYNChronicity 2018: The National Conference on HIV, HCV, and LGBT Health
- April 20, 2018: “Leveraging the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program to Cure Co-Infected People with HIV of HCV Infection” Meeting at Georgetown University Law Center
- February 8, 2018: “Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access” Presentation to the Office of HIV/AIDS and Infectious Disease Policy’s Hepatitis C Medicaid Affinity Group

MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS

- [October 2018](#)
- [September 2018](#)
- [August 2018](#)
- [July 2018](#)
- [June 2018](#)
- [May 2018](#)
- [April 2018](#)
- [March 2018](#)