



Expert Panel Calls for Elimination of Hepatitis B & C in the United States
*NVHR urges Trump Administration to prioritize
development and coordination of hepatitis B & C elimination strategies*

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Washington, DC (March 28, 2017) - The [National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable](#) (NVHR) today hailed the release of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (The National Academies) consensus report, [A National Strategy for the Elimination of Hepatitis B and C](#). The report confirms that elimination of the public health threat of hepatitis B and C in the United States is feasible by 2030 and outlines specific actions to hasten the end of the diseases.

“The National Academies has said in no uncertain terms that the United States can eliminate hepatitis B and C by 2030, putting us on the path to achieve one of the greatest public health victories in our lifetimes and end the unspeakable grief and suffering caused by both epidemics,” said Ryan Clary, executive director of NVHR. “In keeping with the top recommendation in the report, we strongly urge the Trump Administration to immediately take steps to ensure that the highest level of the federal government develops and oversees a coordinated effort to manage viral hepatitis elimination.”

An estimated five million people are living with hepatitis B or hepatitis C in the United States. More people die from hepatitis B and C than all other infectious diseases (including HIV) combined, according to figures reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Hepatitis B and hepatitis C are the leading causes of liver cancer in the United States. It is one among the few cancers on the rise, and one of the deadliest. There are alarming health disparities faced by several communities for both of the viruses. Asian American and Pacific Islander Americans comprise over 50 percent of hepatitis B cases in the United States, while people who use drugs, African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, veterans, baby boomers, and the incarcerated/returning citizens are disproportionately impacted by hepatitis C. There has also been an alarming rise in hepatitis B and hepatitis C cases among people who inject drugs due to the devastating effects of the nation’s opioid epidemic.

In May, 2016, the World Health Assembly made a historic commitment to end hepatitis B and C globally by 2030; encouraging each member state to assess the feasibility of national elimination of viral hepatitis. The National Academies report outlines recommendations in five areas (“strategic directions”) in which actions will be needed to place the United States on a path to reach this goal: Public Information, Essential Interventions, Service Delivery, Financing Elimination, and Research. Key recommendations in the report include ending perinatal hepatitis B transmission; expanding adult hepatitis B vaccination; ensuring access to hepatitis C curative treatment for all; increasing access to syringe access programs and opioid agonist therapy services; providing screening, vaccination, and treatment for hepatitis B and C to those in the criminal justice system; and implementing quality measures for hepatitis B vaccination and hepatitis B and C testing to monitor compliance with national guidelines.

“The National Academies strategy underscores that the United States must provide sufficient funding and leadership to end the hepatitis B and C epidemics,” added Clary. “By implementing The National Academies’ recommendations, we can erase the stigma that keeps our nation from achieving elimination and specifically address the needs of those most heavily impacted by hepatitis B and C, including people who use drugs, the incarcerated, and people using Medicaid and other public health programs. NVHR will work with our partners to ensure that the United States seizes the opportunity to be one of the first countries to pursue elimination of the two deadly diseases that disproportionately impact some of our nation’s most vulnerable communities.”

About NVHR: The National Viral Hepatitis is a coalition of 500 organizations working to fight, and ultimately end, the hepatitis B and C epidemics in the United States. We seek an aggressive response from policymakers, public health officials, medical and health care providers, the media, and the general public through our advocacy, education, and technical assistance. NVHR believes an end to the hepatitis B and C epidemics is within our reach and can be achieved through addressing stigma and health disparities, removing barriers to prevention, care and treatment, and ensuring respect and compassion for all affected communities. For more information, visit www.nvhr.org.

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