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**NVHR Applauds Latest Guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Recommending Hepatitis C Screening for all U.S. Adults, Including Pregnant Persons**

The latest guidance from the CDC is an important step in the fight for hepatitis C elimination, but increased federal funding for viral hepatitis still needed.

Washington, D.C. (April 9, 2020) – The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR), a national coalition working to eliminate viral hepatitis, today applauded the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for expanding the hepatitis C screening recommendations to include all adults aged 18 and over and during every pregnancy. Expanding to universal hepatitis C screening is critical for reducing stigma and saving lives by identifying approximately one million Americans who don't know that they are living with the potentially deadly hepatitis C virus (HCV), especially among pregnant persons.

“The CDC guidance is necessary to increase the screening and surveillance of hepatitis C so that we can identify, treat, and cure hundreds of thousands of Americans who don't know they are living with the illness and are unknowingly passing it on to their loved ones,” said NVHR Director Lauren Canary.

“Especially at a time when liver disease and other underlying illnesses place thousands at increased risk of COVID-19, it is more important than ever to increase the screening and treatment of hepatitis C.”

Hepatitis C has historically been associated with more deaths in the U.S. than the top 60 other notifiable infectious diseases combined, including HIV. Of the 2.4 million Americans living with hepatitis C, nearly half are unaware. Until a person is cured, they can continue transmitting HCV unintentionally, which puts millions of Americans at risk of harmful health complications, like liver cancer. Vertical transmission rates of hepatitis C during pregnancy have also risen drastically, putting infants at risk of developing pediatric hepatitis C infection and necessitating screening during every pregnancy.

Between 2010-2018, acute cases of hepatitis C surged by 400%, largely driven by unsafe injection drug use related to the opioid crisis. However, lack of access to evidence-based prevention strategies, coupled with discriminatory treatment restrictions in some states, continue to limit hepatitis C treatment and elimination efforts. Yet new studies prove the cost-effectiveness of the hepatitis C treatment, which cures most patients within eight to 12 weeks.

“An integrated approach is needed to effectively manage the hepatitis C epidemic, which is now impacting three distinct generations simultaneously. As an immediate next step, Congress should increase funding to improve hepatitis C screening and surveillance, and state Medicaid programs must increase access to hepatitis C treatment,” added Canary.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/knowmorehepatitis/>

About the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR)

The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, a program of [HEP](#), is a national coalition working together to eliminate viral hepatitis in the United States. NVHR's vision is a healthier world without viral hepatitis.

NVHR's work is guided and informed by our beliefs and commitment to: Participation, Inclusiveness, Intersectionality, Health Equity, and Stigma Elimination. For more information, visit www.nvhr.org

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