

Best Practices for Sharing Policy Updates Affecting the Viral Hepatitis Community

The below memo outlines general best practices for publicizing policy updates that may affect the viral hepatitis community. These are based on the need to engage multiple audiences to ensure that policy changes are effectively communicated. Core audiences include state departments of health, healthcare providers, patients, advocates, and insurance companies. Most of the tactics can be used across audiences and leverage several key platforms to consider leveraging. In general, the more places and more times the message can be shared, the better.

Sharing Updates Across Digital Platforms

Digital platforms can be utilized for sharing relevant policy and news updates with key audiences.

Sharing via Website and Email

- Announce policy updates via press release with a link to the press release in the *news* section of the website.
- Publicize the update on your home page or any other pages relevant to viral hepatitis, patients, and health professionals.
- Draft a blurb that can be included in newsletters or shared with email lists.

Best Practices for Sharing on Social Media

- Share the press release across social media platforms to ensure that a broad audience sees the release. Social media posts with relevant terms will also appear in google search results so sharing the press release in multiple areas will increase the likelihood that those looking for updates can find it.
- Tag government and health policy reporters in new content to also encourage media coverage and amplification of the updates.
- Use rich media, like photos, gifs, infographics, and videos, in your posts to increase engagement and visibility.
- Tag partners and target audiences in your social media posts. This helps draw those audiences to the new content and will increase in additional shares.
 - Suggested groups to tag include: @NVHR1, @CDChep, @HHS_ViralHep, @NASTAD, @HepBUnited, @AASLDTweets
- Use common hashtags to further amplify the content. Suggested hashtags include:
 - #hepatitis, #hepC, #hepA, #hepB, #hepatitiselimination, #HCV, #ViralHep
- Repost or share relevant content around key public health milestones, including:
 - National Minority Health Month (April)
 - National Adult HBV Vaccine Awareness Day (April 30)
 - Hepatitis Awareness Month (May)
 - National Hispanic Hepatitis Awareness Day (May 15)
 - National Hepatitis Testing Day (May 19)
 - National African American Hepatitis Action Day (July 25)
 - World Hepatitis Day (July 28)
 - Liver Cancer Awareness Month (October)

Engaging Specific Groups for Amplification

In addition to sharing policy updates on digital platforms, there are three specific audiences to separately engage: the media, healthcare providers, and advocacy organizations.

Media

- Share the press release with a broad range of reporters and offer a spokesperson to comment on the record.
 - Reporters covering public health, the government, and public interest stories should be included across a diverse array of publications.
 - Publications should include major newspapers, tribal newspapers and/or blogs, local TV and radio stations, and health publications.
- Engage directly with reporters and editors at targeted health publications like [Hepatitis Magazine](#) which is a great resource for advocates and providers in the hepatitis space.

Healthcare Providers

- Identify and engage key healthcare provider organizations such as the state Medical Society, state Academy of Family Physicians, state Nurses Association, state Association of Nurse Practitioners, and state Pharmacy Society.
- In addition to sharing the press release with healthcare provider organizations, ask organizations to share relevant updates across their networks. Sending a toolkit that includes a newsletter blurb and draft social media posts can help expedite them sharing updates to their network (see Appendix for example).

Advocacy Organizations

Engaging advocacy organization is critical to sharing updates with advocates and patients and empowering the patient voice in their care.

- In addition to sharing the press release with advocacy organizations, ask the organizations to share relevant updates across their networks by sending a toolkit that includes a newsletter blurb and draft social media posts that they can use to amplify the updates.
- Identify if there are advocacy forums where a spokesperson can participate by either providing a presentation/summary of policy updates and/or answer advocate questions. For example, NVHR hosts a monthly Grassroots Advocacy Call that would offer a platform to share policy updates.
- Engage national and local advocacy organization. National advocacy organizations to engage include:
 - National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
 - National Hepatitis Corrections Network
 - NASTAD
 - Hepatitis B Foundation
 - Hep B United
 - National Harm Reduction Coalition

Appendix: Sample Outreach Template to Share Treatment Access Changes

Dear [NAME]

I am reaching out on behalf of [ORGANIZATION] to address recent changes to hepatitis C treatment access in your state. [ORGANIZATION] is [INSERT DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION]. Improving access to hepatitis C treatment is critical to combatting the rising rates of viral hepatitis in the U.S, and we are pleased with the recent updates made by [INSERT STATE MEDICAID PROGRAM].

As you likely know, prior authorization requirements [AND/OR OTHER TREATMENT BARRIERS] have been lifted in [STATE]. While this is a vital step forward to ensuring all patients with hepatitis C can access curative treatment, many clinicians and patients may not be aware of this update. **That's why we're reaching out today: to ask for your help in sharing the good news about this policy change!**

Included below is a short blurb explaining the policy change and what this means for hepatitis C patients in the state. Would you be able to share this via your email listserv or newsletter to your community?

We're happy to provide more information and start a dialogue on this important issue. To learn about this issue visit www.stateofhepc.org. If you'd like recommendations about other ways to share this information, visit <https://nvhr.org/resources/communicating-policy-updates/>.

Thank you,
[NAME, TITLE, ORGANIZATION]

Announcing Hepatitis C Treatment Access Changes in Our State

Viral hepatitis rates have been rising across the U.S. for several years, despite the availability of curative treatment. In 2020, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated their hepatitis C screening guidelines to recommend that ALL adults get screened at least once, and those at risk to be screened regularly.

Now, we're sharing that [STATE MEDICAID PROGRAM] has removed [PRIOR AUTHORIZATION/ OTHER TREATMENT BARRIER] for hepatitis C treatment, helping to increase access to curative treatment.

We encourage those in our community to reach out to [PATIENTS/RELEVANT AUDIENCE] and encourage them to get tested, get treated, get CURED. Learn more about this development at www.stateofhepc.org [OR OTHER RELEVANT LINK]. Please share this information with [PATIENTS/RELEVANT AUDIENCE] and let us know if you have any questions.

About the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR)

The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable, an initiative of [HEP](http://www.hep.org), is a national coalition fighting for an equitable world free of viral hepatitis. NVHR seeks to eliminate viral hepatitis in the United States and improve the lives of those affected through advocacy, education, and support to national, state, and local partners. For more information, visit www.nvhr.org.