Thanks to the work of dedicated advocates from across the country, 2021 was a year of great progress towards eliminating viral hepatitis. NVHR is proud to have contributed to these successes at the national, state, and local levels, and we look forward to putting in the work to solve existing and future challenges.

Click here to check out our full 2021 Year In Review to read about NVHR and the viral hepatitis advocacy community's successes!
Help Update the Criteria for the State of Hep C Evaluation Process

NVHR and the Center for Health Law & Policy Innovation (CHLPI) are in the process of updating the evaluation criteria for *Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access* and would like to hear from people who have been personally impacted by hepatitis C, healthcare team members, advocates, and other stakeholders about ongoing barriers to hepatitis C treatment access in their communities.

Fill Out Our Survey Below!

Critical barriers remain in many states to hepatitis C treatment access, and there is an opportunity to update the project's evaluation process to better account for these remaining barriers. Fill out our survey by **Sunday, March 6** to inform the project's evaluation criteria moving forward.

**POLICY UPDATES**

Sign On to the Drug Policy Working Group’s Letter to Support Harm Reduction Funding. The Harm Reduction Working Group and AIDS United are welcoming organizations to sign a letter to HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and ONDCP Director Rahul Gupta to summarize the feelings of the harm reduction community in the wake of the safer smoking kit scandal and the
Biden Administration’s response. All sign ons must be made by 12:00 PM EST on Friday, February 25. Click here to read and sign the letter.

State of Hep C Releases Latest Snapshot Report. NVHR and CHLPI released a new snapshot report in January for Hepatitis C: The State of Medicaid Access. Since launching the report in 2017, 33 states have either eliminated or reduced their fibrosis restrictions, 29 have loosened their sobriety restrictions, and 28 have scaled back their prescriber restrictions. Additionally, there are now 11 states that have removed prior authorization for most patients entirely: Washington, Louisiana, New York, California, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Rhode Island, Missouri, Alaska, and Virginia.

Looking to Oregon for Models in Addressing the Opioid Crisis. Oregon passed a law in 2020 to decriminalize personal-use drug possession and increase funding for recovery services, modeled after a harm reduction approach first seen in Portugal that has led to a steady decline in overdose deaths, rates of addiction, and hepatitis C and HIV infections. Massachusetts and Vermont are considering similar bills and activists in California are working toward a state initiative on the 2024 ballot. Read NVHR Director of Policy Daniel Raymond’s latest Letter to the Editor in the New York Times on why other states should follow suit.

Hep ElimiNATION Preliminary Grade Comment Period Open Through April 15. We are inviting stakeholders to provide feedback on their jurisdiction’s preliminary Hep ElimiNATION grade. The public comment submission form may be accessed on the Hep ElimiNATION website. Comments will be accepted until April 15, 2022. Any score modifications resulting from this comment period will be reflected in the June 2022 update. Please reach out to Adrienne Simmons, NVHR Director of Programs, for any questions or to learn more about how you can get involved in elimination efforts in your jurisdiction: adrienne@nvhr.org

North Carolina Releases Viral Hepatitis Elimination Plan. The North Carolina Viral Hepatitis Task Force recently released Viral Hepatitis in North Carolina: Comprehensive Response Recommendations, which aims to address methods and issue recommendations to reduce hepatitis A, B, and C incidence and prevalence in North Carolina, and increase access to care and treatment through leveraging of existing infrastructure and partnerships.
FROM THE COMMUNITY

Webinar: Hepatitis Delta and Risk of Liver Cancer

Join the Hepatitis B Foundation’s Hep Delta Connect program for their upcoming webinar. Habiba Kohdir of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm will be presenting her paper "Risk of Hepatocellular Carcinoma in Hepatitis B and D Virus Co-Infected Patients: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Longitudinal Studies."

Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 10AM ET

Register Here

Support Vital Strategies’ Harm Reduction Campaign

Vital Strategies launched a new, interactive online memorial to honor the more than one million people who have lost their lives to drug overdose over the past two decades in the U.S. The digital mosaic allows anyone to commemorate a loved one lost to overdose and calls for urgent action in their name. Following the launch, Vital Strategies will share the largest-ever national advertising campaign promoting harm reduction to raise awareness about commonsense ways to save
lives in some of the states hardest hit by the overdose crisis.

View the Memorial Here

March 1 is Zero Discrimination Day

The Hepatitis B Foundation and Hep B United are launching a campaign to focus on fighting hepatitis B discrimination. The campaign will launch with #ZeroDiscriminationDay on March 1 and continue with #EndHepBDiscrimination graphics and messaging throughout the month of March. You can find graphics and suggested language for social media posts here to help spread the message and drive advocates to their Discrimination Registry.

Opening for Research Assistant at the University of Rhode Island

Interested in playing a part in efforts to help develop novel rapid, point-of-care, hepatitis C virus RNA diagnostic fingerstick testing? There is now an opening for a full-time Research Assistant position with Lynn E. Taylor, MD in Providence, RI. Because this is a brief pilot study, the position is a shared one where the RA will work with the Alzheimer’s Biomarker Laboratory as well. Hiring ASAP! For more information, see www.jobs.uri.edu position SF01239.
Navigating the Harm Reduction Funding Landscape: A Guide for State, Federal, and Private Funding

The NASTAD Drug User Health Team has released *Navigating the Harm Reduction Funding Landscape: A Guide for State, Federal and Private Funding*, a new resource designed specifically for community-based harm reduction programs and Syringe Services Programs (SSPs). It provides an overview of navigating the funding landscape and fulfilling the requirements in grant proposals and their application processes.

Reach out to NASTAD’s Drug User Health team with questions or to request technical assistance on grant-writing and funding, and sustainability for SSPs.

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**LATEST NEWS**

The Richmond Times-Dispatch (by NVHR Community Engagement Coordinator Robin Lord Smith): *Opinion: To address Virginia’s viral hepatitis epidemic, we must root out the stigma that comes with it*

The New York Times: *Pandemic Era Tests May Speed Hepatitis-C Detection* (features NVHR provider advocate Marguerite Beiser, ANP-BC)

The Washington Post: *Hepatitis C is a growing threat to moms and babies. But screening is inadequate.* (features NVHR provider advocate Tatyana Kushner, MD)


The Hill: *Advocates scorn lawmakers over 'crack pipe' uproar*
KALW: Hep C treatment van makes cure accessible to those who need it most. (features NVHR provider advocate Jennifer Price, MD, PhD)

NYN Media: Opinion: New York State is ready for statewide injection sites

The Hill: Opinion: 'Crack pipes' aren't the problem — stigmatizing harm reduction is

The Roanoke Times (by NVHR Public Health Advisor Lauren Canary): Letter: Another consequence of the opioid crisis