

Wisconsin Promotes Hepatitis C Testing Among Baby Boomers

Wisconsin's Division of Public Health has educated stakeholders and engaged partners in implementing the baby boomer testing recommendation.

Wisconsin's Division of Public Health (WDPH) reports that while baby boomers represent only a quarter of the state's population in Wisconsin, they account for 53 percent of its hepatitis C (HCV) cases.¹ Because of the high burden of HCV in this birth cohort, CDC and the United States Preventive Services Task Force recommend that all baby boomers be tested for HCV. (For more information, please see ASTHO's report "[CDC's Recommendations for One-Time Hepatitis C Virus Testing for Persons Born During 1945-1965: Public Health's Role and Key Elements for Effective Implementation.](#)") In response, WDPH initiated plans to increase knowledge about the importance of testing baby boomers for HCV. WDPH has shared the testing recommendations with public health partners, community based organizations, providers, and primary care associations throughout the state.

Steps Taken:

Educating Stakeholders:

- WDPH is leveraging existing provider training infrastructure by partnering with training centers and academia to disseminate the testing recommendations. (See "Partnerships," below.)
- WDPH developed an epidemiologic profile to describe the burden of HCV in Wisconsin. Using profile data, WDPH also created an HCV [fact sheet](#) to highlight trends in baby boomers.
- WDPH presented the testing recommendations to local public health departments during one of its State Health Officer Webcasts and during three of its Communicable Disease Spring Seminars.

Leveraging Partnerships:

- Several partner organizations supported uptake of the testing recommendations and provided educational materials for physicians. For example, infectious disease physicians with the Midwest AIDS Training & Education Center and the University of Wisconsin helped provide HCV training to clinicians and staff at tribal clinics, community health centers, and local health departments.
- WDPH partnered with the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health to support an MD/MPH student's field learning project on hepatitis C. The student will survey Wisconsin primary care physicians and physician assistants about their attitudes and practices regarding baby boomer screening and their capacity to manage chronic HCV in this birth cohort.

Results:

- WDPH has elevated the importance of the testing recommendations through targeted communications with providers and partners.
- WDPH is leveraging existing infrastructure for provider education and testing services.

¹ Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health. "Hepatitis C in Wisconsin: Focus on Baby Boomers." Available at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/document/p00857a.pdf>. Accessed 11-21-14.

State Story



Lessons Learned:

- WDPH's report, "[Epidemiologic Profile of Hepatitis C Virus \(HCV\) in Wisconsin 2014](#)," is an informative tool that can be used to communicate the scope of HCV burden to local public health departments, community partners, healthcare providers, legislators, and policymakers.
- Public health agencies can harness existing communications channels (e.g., State Health Officer Webcasts) to heighten testing recommendation awareness amongst stakeholders.
- Because local health departments may have limited capacity to perform rapid testing, public health agencies can collaborate with partners that have an established culture of testing (e.g., AIDS Service Organizations) to improve testing rates.

For more information:

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<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P0/p00860.pdf>

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