



Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kentucky holds statewide Hepatitis C elimination meeting

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 29, 2019) - Kentucky's Department for Public Health, within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, hosted a statewide Hepatitis C (HCV) elimination meeting Monday.

Staff from the state's local health departments, universities, hospitals, corrections departments, behavioral health facilities, private providers, and other groups attended the strategic planning meeting.

Kentucky leads the nation in both acute and chronic cases of Hepatitis C. HCV is a viral infection that causes liver inflammation, sometimes leading to serious liver damage, cancer, and death. It is spread through contaminated blood.

"More than 43,000 Kentuckians are currently living with Hepatitis C. The detrimental effects, including negative health implications, lack of productivity, and cost due to this disease, are enormous," said Dr. Jeffrey Howard, Commissioner of Kentucky's Department for Public Health. "This is why this effort is so important. DPH is organizing

the state's leaders in HCV treatment in order to develop a comprehensive and statewide strategy to eliminate Hepatitis C."

Intravenous drug use is a large contributor to cases of HCV. Over the past 10 years Kentucky's incidence rate has been as high as 5 times the national average. Preliminary information from 2019 shows the rate of disease is higher in parts of eastern and northern Kentucky.

Mechanisms are in place to gather more accurate and timely data regarding HCV, using the Kentucky Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and electronic laboratory reporting.

"We are confident that through developing a statewide strategic plan that orients all of our partners towards eliminating HCV from our state, we can make great strides in ending the HCV epidemic in our state," said Dr. Howard.

Current, relevant data is necessary to understand the burden of disease for improved allocation of funding and to prioritize areas in need.

Additional information is available at <http://chfs.ky.gov/>.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.



Kentucky HCV Environmental Scan

Hepatitis C Environmental Criteria

Research Findings

- Environmental factors that increase the risk of HCV infection include:
 - Injection drug use
 - Blood transfusion
 - Organ transplantation
 - Needle sharing
 - Sexual contact
 - Birth to an infected mother
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Welcome