



## **Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **New option for Kentucky, Tennessee patients seeking treatment for Hepatitis C**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (August 1, 2019) - A new Hepatitis C treatment service will provide an immediate impact for people living in southeast Kentucky and northeast Tennessee.

With the assistance of a USDA grant, Dayspring Health purchased a FibroScan machine for its clinic in Jellico, TN. Previously, patients were traveling to Lexington, KY or Knoxville, TN to receive a liver scan to start treatment.

"Our community no longer needs to travel long distances for the care they need," said Dr. Geogy Thomas, Medical Director at Dayspring Health. "By caring for our communities and curing Hepatitis C, we are moving closer to reclaiming our futures."

Underscoring the significance of this announcement, the state health commissioners from Tennessee and Kentucky were present to highlight the service.

"We have seen a surge in chronic Hepatitis C cases in Tennessee in recent years, primarily among the baby boomer generation, as well as in those under 40," said Tennessee Health Commissioner Lisa Piercey, MD, MBA, FAAP. "We are pleased to

see this new location as a welcome addition to help increase treatment capacity for Hep C patients in this region.”

Sometimes called the “Silent Killer,” Hepatitis C is a blood-borne liver infection that often goes undetected. In fact, 70-80% of acute infections have no symptoms, though many patients are at risk of developing chronic issues, including liver cancer.

“Kentucky leads the country in both acute and chronic cases of Hepatitis C, which makes the work we are doing here so important,” said Dr. Jeffrey Howard, Commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health.

“It is estimated that 43,000 Kentuckians are currently living with Hepatitis C,” Howard added. “I think the number actually far exceeds that. It should also be noted that the magnitude of this disease in our state is directly related to our Substance Use Disorder problem.”

Kentucky is developing a statewide strategy to eliminate Hepatitis C through partnerships with local health departments and primary care providers, such as Dayspring Health.

New medications have cured an estimated 95% of those treated for the disease.

To set up an appointment for a liver scan, contact Dayspring Health at 423-784-5771 or stop by the clinic at 550 Sunset Trail in Jellico, TN.

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.*

