

State Of Illinois Launches Coalition In Effort To Eliminate Viral Hepatitis In Illinois

by Michael Claffey
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CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) launched a new effort today to eliminate viral hepatitis in Illinois. The Illinois Hepatitis Coalition held its inaugural meeting, bringing together key stakeholders - including clinicians, academic researchers, and community partners - with the goal of formulating an equity-driven

strategic plan to end the viral hepatitis epidemic in the state. The work of the coalition is funded through a \$1.5 million federal grant.

“The number of people in Illinois and across the nation living with hepatitis B and C is continuing to rise,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “The stubborn persistence of these preventable liver diseases demands that we bring together dedicated thought leaders and community partners to reverse these trends and put Illinois on a course to eliminate new cases of these diseases.”

Recent data indicates that cases of hepatitis B and C have continued to rise in Illinois. In 2020, the data showed a total of 388 confirmed cases of hepatitis B and 2,873 confirmed cases of hepatitis C, however many people with these diseases remain undiagnosed.

According to the [2020 CDC National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance system](#), there was an increase in the Hepatitis C rate in Illinois from 1.2/per 100,000 population in 2019 to 1.6/per 100,000 in 2020, which was above the U.S average. Hepatitis B rates in Illinois have fluctuated over the last 5 years but remain below the national average in 2020.

Viral hepatitis is the leading cause of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation. An estimated 4.4 million Americans are living with chronic hepatitis.

The disease affects the entire population, but certain populations are at higher risk of certain types of hepatitis, including those who engage in intravenous drug use or children born to such individuals.

Academic and community stakeholders seeking more information about the coalition are invited to email adebola.hassan@illinois.gov and cc Alyssa.stuck@illinois.gov.

For more information about IDPH’s hepatitis prevention and treatment efforts, click [HERE](#).