



Forum for Collaborative HIV Research Applauds Task Force Call for Testing All Baby Boomers for the Hepatitis C Virus

WASHINGTON, DC (June 25, 2013) – In response to the decision by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) to expand coverage requirements for the one-time testing of all baby boomers (born from 1945-1965) for the hepatitis C virus (HCV), Veronica Miller, PhD, Executive Director of the Forum for Collaborative HIV Research, issued this statement on behalf of the leaders in HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis from government, academia, industry and the patient advocacy community that comprise the organization.

“The Forum for Collaborative HIV Research applauds the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force for acting to help the estimated 2.7 million to 3.9 million Americans now infected with HCV and particularly baby boomers who were infected when they were in their teens and twenties and are now five times more likely than other adults to have undiagnosed disease.

Treatment with effective therapies can cure HCV. In light of recent estimates that 45 to 85 percent of people living with HCV in the U.S. don't know they are infected, expanding access to a simple test, used just one time, has the potential to identify up to 800,000 undiagnosed cases of HCV. This is especially important to reduce the human suffering, mortality and billions of dollars spent on treating the consequences of HCV-related disease and to profoundly reduce the spread of a virus that has reached epidemic levels.

As one of the organizations highlighting the need for screening all baby boomers for hepatitis C, the Forum for Collaborative HIV Research welcomes USPSTF's action and stands ready to work with policymakers at the federal and state levels to take the next step – by creating the pathway for accelerated adoption of one-time HCV testing across the country. An increased focus on identifying and providing quality care to those at greatest risk for HCV is crucial to overcoming this epidemic and thus, must become a priority issue for the public health community.”

About the Forum for Collaborative HIV Research

Now part of the University of California (UC), Berkeley School of Public Health and based in Washington, DC, the Forum was founded in 1997 as the outgrowth of the Keystone Center's report "The Keystone National Policy Dialogue on Establishment of Studies to Optimize Medical Management of HIV Infection," which called for an ongoing collaboration among stakeholders to address emerging issues in HIV/AIDS and set the research strategy. Representing government, industry, patient advocates, healthcare providers, foundations and academia, the Forum is a public/private partnership that is guided by an Executive Committee that sets the research agenda. The Forum organizes roundtables and issues reports on a range of global HIV/AIDS issues, including treatment-related toxicities, immune-based therapies, health services research, co-infections, prevention, and the transference of research results into care. Forum recommendations have changed how clinical trials are conducted, accelerated the delivery of new classes of drugs, heightened awareness of TB/HIV co-infection, and helped to spur national momentum toward universal testing for HIV. [http:// www.hivforum.org](http://www.hivforum.org)

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