

Combating the Silent
Epidemic of Viral Hepatitis
**Action Plan for the Prevention,
Care & Treatment of Viral Hepatitis**

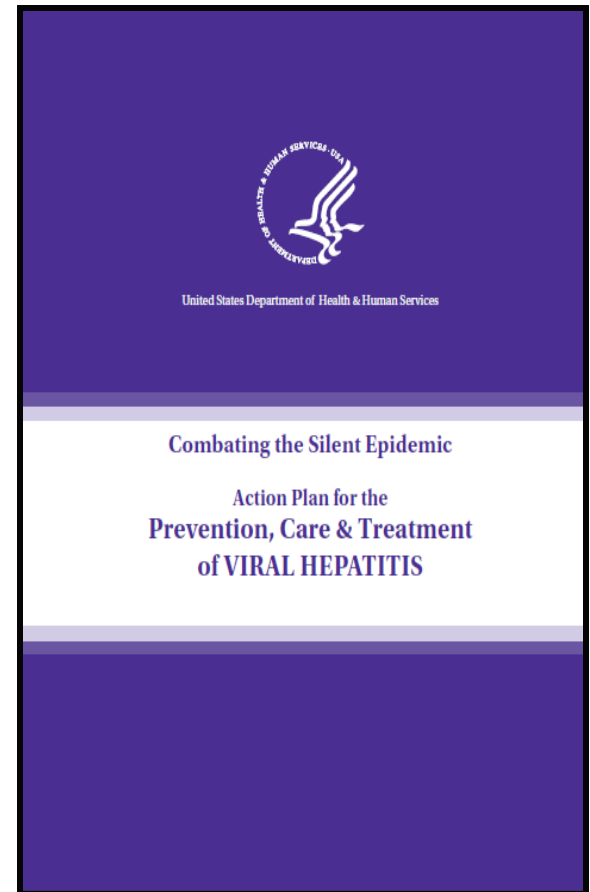
Increasing Routine Viral Hepatitis Testing Consultation Report Findings

Corinna Dan, RN, MPH and Ronald O. Valdiserri, MD, MPH
Office of HIV/AIDS and Infectious Disease Policy
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
November 27, 2012



HHS Viral Hepatitis Action Plan- United States 2011-2013

- ❑ EDUCATING PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITIES TO REDUCE HEALTH DISPARITIES
- ❑ IMPROVING TESTING, CARE, AND TREATMENT TO PREVENT LIVER DISEASE AND CANCER
- ❑ STRENGTHENING SURVEILLANCE TO DETECT VIRAL HEPATITIS TRANSMISSION AND DISEASE
- ❑ ELIMINATING TRANSMISSION OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE VIRAL HEPATITIS
- ❑ REDUCING VIRAL HEPATITIS CASES CAUSED BY DRUG-USE BEHAVIORS
- ❑ PROTECTING PATIENTS AND WORKERS FROM HEALTH-CARE-ASSOCIATED VIRAL HEPATITIS



Proposed 2020 Goals of the Viral Hepatitis Action Plan (full implementation)

- Increase from 33% to 66% the proportion of persons who are aware of their HBV infection
- Increase from 45% to 66% the proportion of persons who are aware of their HCV infection
- Reduce by 25% the number of new HCV infections
- Eliminate mother-to-child HBV transmission



Background

- Chronic viral hepatitis affects up to 5.3 million Americans and over half of them are unaware of their infection.
- Accurate blood tests are available however, due to low knowledge, awareness and the reluctance of providers and patients to discuss risk factors; lack of health insurance coverage; conflicting guidelines regarding who should be tested; and limited resources, testing has not been effectively implemented.



Technical Consultation on Testing

- **The Office of HIV/AIDS and Infectious Disease Policy convened a day-long, multi-disciplinary consultation to examine various testing approaches for hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) on February 23, 2012.**
- **Participants included:**
 - Representatives of Federal agencies,
 - physician associations,
 - State and local health departments (HDs),
 - community health centers (CHCs),
 - community-based organizations (CBOs), and
 - hepatitis advocacy organizations.



The Challenges of Testing for Viral Hepatitis: A National Perspective

- CDC Identified Challenges to Routine Viral Hepatitis Testing
 - An estimated 30–70 percent of infected individuals are unaware of their status.
 - Providers have low knowledge levels.
 - Consumers and patients have low knowledge levels.
 - Providers are reluctant to discuss risk factors, especially around past drug use.
 - At-risk groups are often culturally and linguistically isolated.
 - Individuals at risk often lack insurance.
 - Inconsistent Testing Guidelines and Recommendations.
 - The public health infrastructure is limited.



Viral Hepatitis Testing: Barriers & Needs Identified

- ❑ Create and disseminate best practices and guidelines.
- ❑ Educate providers.
- ❑ Create clinical measures.
- ❑ Address laboratory challenges.
- ❑ Overcome funding challenges.



Effective Strategies: Best Practices & Models for Testing

- ❑ **Link to confirmatory testing and care.** Testing for viral hepatitis must be closely linked with testing to confirm infection and care and treatment options.
- ❑ **Leverage established HIV systems.** Utilizing established HIV outreach systems and resources such as trained HIV staff to conduct routine viral hepatitis testing is one common platform upon which to build viral hepatitis testing activities.
- ❑ **Utilize electronic health records.** EHRs are an essential component to access information on an individual and population level.
- ❑ **Non-physician centered models.** Non-physician centered models such as team-based approaches, nurses, physician assistants, etc. effectively extend the provision of viral hepatitis testing in various health care settings.
- ❑ **Educate and support patients.** Patients often feel hopeless when diagnosed with chronic viral hepatitis. Patients need to be educated about the meaning of their diagnosis and what actions they can take.



Growing Momentum to Address Viral Hepatitis

- IOM Report: Hepatitis & Liver Cancer (2010)
- HHS Viral Hepatitis Action Plan (2011)
- Era of improved hepatitis C therapy
- Growing awareness of the impact of these preventable diseases
- Recommendations for HHS support for testing:
 - Compile and disseminate best practices
 - Incorporate viral hepatitis in grant/program announcements



Thank you!

Corinna Dan, RN, MPH

Corinna.Dan@hhs.gov

