

# Hepatitis C Virus Letter to Providers from DDAP

The Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) is concerned about the rise in hepatitis C cases in Pennsylvania (PA), particularly among persons who inject drugs (IDU). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends hepatitis C virus (HCV) testing for those who currently inject any type of drug (Opioids, Methamphetamine, Cocaine, etc.) or have injected drugs in the past, including those who injected once or a few times many years ago. PA has experienced a dramatic increase in hepatitis C infections in individuals with injection opioid and/or heroin addiction who are 18 to 35 years of age. DDAP recommends that all licensed drug and alcohol addiction treatment facilities perform a risk assessment for HCV and refer to medical or community based providers for necessary screening/testing as appropriate.

Because many individuals you serve are at high risk for hepatitis C, you play an important role in combating this public health issue. If you have current practices that you believe are effective in combating this disease, we would appreciate you sharing these with us so we can promote them across the field. Please send this information to DDAP Treatment, Prevention & Intervention Bureau Director, Angela Episale, at [aepisale@pa.gov](mailto:aepisale@pa.gov).

Through improved identification and treatment of individuals with hepatitis C, we can begin to reduce the spread of this disease. Please remember to obtain consumer consent and maintain confidentiality when sharing test results with the consumers' primary care physicians or other physical health specialists involved in hepatitis treatment. In some cases, you may be able to utilize a Qualified Service Organization Agreement (QSOA) to permit the exchange of patient identifying information. If you have questions about when this is possible, please contact our Division of Licensing Acting Director, Gary Stauffer, at [gstauffer@pa.gov](mailto:gstauffer@pa.gov).

For more information regarding hepatitis C testing of IDU clientele, please contact:

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PA Department of Health  
717-787-3350  
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Thank you for your critical assistance in controlling hepatitis C in PA.

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