



Philadelphia Department of Public Health
Division of Disease Control

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Health Notification

Pennsylvania's Hepatitis C Screening Act (Act 87 of 2016) Takes Effect September 19, 2016

The Hepatitis C Screening Act (Act 87) was signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf on July 20th, 2016. It requires all individuals born between 1945 and 1965 (i.e. 'baby boomers'), who receive inpatient or outpatient health services in a hospital, health care facility, or physician's office, to be offered a **hepatitis C screening test**. This law went into effect on Sunday, September 18th.

A test must be offered to **all** persons born between 1945 and 1965, regardless of risk factors or symptoms. People with hepatitis C can live for decades without symptoms, so many baby boomers remain unaware that they are living with an infection that can cause liver disease, liver failure, and/or cancer.

While Act 87 focuses on improving screening of baby boomers, all patients with risk factors – including drug use, tattoos received in an unlicensed setting, unprotected sex with someone who is hepatitis C positive, and blood or organ transplant before 1992 – should also be offered the test as part of standard medical care.

In Philadelphia, an estimated 53,000 people are living with hepatitis C. Less than half of them are aware they have been infected and less than 5% - a mere 2,600 - have been cured of the virus. Clinicians, especially primary care providers, are critical partners who can help improve Philadelphia's hepatitis C care continuum by identifying all patients living with the virus and linking them to care and treatment.

All cases of acute and chronic hepatitis C in Philadelphia residents should be reported to the Department of Public Health (PDPH). Most chronic cases are reported to PDPH from clinical laboratories. Clinicians should report acute cases of hepatitis C infection to PDPH at (215) 685-6493. Additional reporting information is available at: <https://hip.phila.gov/ReportDisease/HowToReport>.

The following resources are available to support clinical practices in the implementation of Act 87:

- **Free CME Opportunity.** The Hepatitis C Allies of Philadelphia (HepCAP) coalition has a Continuing Medical Education (CME) opportunity for primary care practices that would like additional knowledge of hepatitis C. This free, one-hour training, presented by local hepatitis treatment specialists, covers screening guidelines and best practices for linking positive patients to care. To schedule a *Hepatitis C for Primary Care Providers* in-service, email hepcap@healthfederation.org or call 215-246-5212.
- **PDPH Educational Materials.** Find links to additional information and download posters and other educational materials at: <https://hip.phila.gov/DiseaseControlGuidance/DiseasesConditions/HepatitisC>
- **Surveillance Updates.** PDPH uses data from providers to take an in-depth look at factors that impact the epidemic. Check out data highlights at: <https://hip.phila.gov/DataReports/Hepatitis>
- **Tools for Implementing Routine Hep C Testing.** The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable provides hepatitis C Electronic Medical Records (EMR) templates, billing codes, and testing best practices collected from clinicians across the nation at: <http://nvhr.org/program>

For more information regarding hepatitis you can also visit www.phillyhepatitis.org.

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