Addressing HCV Across the Continuum:
Maryland’s Hepatitis Testing and Linkage to Care Program

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MISSION AND VISION

MISSION
The mission of the Prevention and Health Promotion Administration is to protect, promote and improve the health and well-being of all Marylanders and their families through provision of public health leadership and through community-based public health efforts in partnership with local health departments, providers, community based organizations, and public and private sector agencies, giving special attention to at-risk and vulnerable populations.

VISION
The Prevention and Health Promotion Administration envisions a future in which all Marylanders and their families enjoy optimal health and well-being.
Hepatitis Testing and Linkage to Care Program

• In November 2016, the Maryland Department of Health explored ways to implement an HCV testing program.

• The purpose of the program is to increase the number of persons living with hepatitis infection that are tested for these infections and made aware of their infection status.

• A Situational Analysis was created to look at HBV and HCV disease burden and epidemiologic trends.
  • High Burden counties that were identified for HBV were Montgomery County, Prince George’s County and Baltimore City.
  • For HCV, Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Prince George’s County, respectively.
Background & Implementation of the Hepatitis Testing Program

• The Center for Viral Hepatitis staff collaborated with HIV Prevention staff to conduct state-wide phone calls with Ryan White Part B grantees.

• The Center for Viral Hepatitis launched an HCV testing guideline and application in December 2016 to 22 jurisdictional local health departments in Maryland and some community-base organizations.
  • Only five local health departments submitted an application expressing interest.

• The Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator (VHPC) conducted training in February for applicants expressing interest.
  • Applicants were trained on the following topics: HCV 101, Testing Guidelines, Linkage to Care, Case Management, Reporting, and the use of HCV test kits.
HCV Testing & Linkage to Care: Current Status

• Active Testing Sites: Baltimore County, Cecil County, Carroll County, Harford County, Anne Arundel County, Washington County, Hepatitis B Initiative-DC (HBI-DC) and Johns Hopkins Emergency Department

• In Development: Worcester County and Frederick County

• Prospective Partners: Howard County
Integrating HCV in New Sites

• HCV testing programs were integrated into Ryan White HIV Prevention programs.
  • Utilized existing staff to do HCV testing

• The VHPC coordinated with the Syringe Service Program Coordinator to integrate HCV testing and SSPs programs.
  • Washington County, Baltimore County, Baltimore City and Frederick County
HCV Testing Program Challenges

• Some of the clients that were tested were already aware of their status.

• In the beginning, clients were declining HCV test when offered.

• Most of the clients do not follow-up with RNA test or appointments.

• Lack of adequate staff and funding to do outreach and/or successfully get clients through care continuum.
HCV Testing Program Successes

• There was an increased in the number of individuals aware of their HCV status and/or identified clients that were out of care.

• Agencies participating in the program were able to identify and located high-risk or HCV positive clients. Agencies utilized the testing program as an opportunity to educate clients.

• Agencies were able to leverage existing staff to do testing and case management to help patients obtain insurance.

• Programs were able to develop a stronger understanding of the burden of the disease in their jurisdiction, which allowed them to take leadership actions.
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