



April 6th, 2016; 5:30pm – 7pm

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting Date: Wednesday, April 6, 2016; 5:30pm – 7pm

Meeting Location: Philadelphia Department of Public Health, 500 S. Broad St

Organizations in Attendance: American Liver Foundation Mid-Atlantic, Bristol-Meyers Squibb, C A Difference, Chester County Health Dept, COMHAR, Delaware Dept of Health, Drexel School of Medicine, Drexel School of Public Health, Gilead, Health Federation of Philadelphia, Hep B Foundation/Hep B United, IAC, Kirkbride Center, Merck, Pathways to Housing, Pennsylvania Dept of Health, Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Philadelphia FIGHT, Prevention Point Philadelphia, SWOP, Temple University, University of Pennsylvania, University of the Sciences/HepTREC

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

48 people attended our April meeting, representing over 23 organizations!

ANNOUNCEMENTS: NEW HEPATITIS RESOURCES

Some new hepatitis educational resources are available through HepCAP and the Philadelphia Dept of Public Health (PDPH).

- **Educational materials:** PDPH has designed and printed a series of hepatitis information booklets and hepatitis c awareness posters. These materials also include postcards and wallet cards with safe drug use messages. PDFs of the materials are available at <http://www.hepcap.org/hepatitis-educational-materials/>
- **FREE CME OPPORTUNITY! Hepatitis C for Primary Care Practices:** HepCAP, in partnership with the Health Federation, has developed a one hour Hep C for PCPs educational program. This will be taught by local hep C experts, all of whom have experience treating hep C. The main objectives of this training are to provide an overview of testing guidelines, describe the work up process to prepare a patient for treatment, understand the local hep C data, and understand the role their practice plays in improving Philadelphia's hep C cascade of care.
 - A flyer for the Hep C for PCPs can be found here: <http://www.hepcap.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/HepCEducation-CMEFlyer-Color.pdf>
 - To schedule a training, contact Lane Taylor at Health Federation: 215-246-5212 or hepCAP@healthfederation.org

HEPATITIS PRIORITIES AND ACTIVITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Our partner at the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, Dr. Charlie Howsare, came from Harrisburg to share state hepatitis data and discuss the PA DOH's hepatitis priorities. Slides from his presentation can be found on HepCAP's website: <http://www.hepcap.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/HepCAP-Apr2016-PAUpdates-AdvocacyPolicy.pdf>

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Some points to highlight from Charlie's presentation:

- **Philadelphia is relatively rich in resources.** Compared to the state health department, PDPH has greater capacity to follow up on hepatitis B and C cases to understand risk factors, demographics, and where people are in the hep C care cascade (from aware of diagnosis to treatment status). PA's DOH does not have funding to do this level of surveillance, although other health departments like Allegheny County (Pittsburgh area) are starting to undertake more hepatitis data collection. Philadelphia also has a greater concentration of care and treatment resources than other parts of the state, especially rural areas with growing hep C epidemics that have resulted from changing patterns in drug use as younger people switch from opioid painkillers to heroin. That said – both Philadelphia and the state could benefit from additional resources to address hepatitis!
 - **... but the state is making progress!** In the last year, Charlie has helped bridge the gap between programs at the state level, applying a Program Collaboration and Service Integration (PCSI) model to addressing the issue of drug user health. Since Gov. Wolf started, the state has become much more progressive in addressing drug user health and the DOH and Dept of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) have been working much more closely together – calling opioid abuse “the worst public health crisis in the state.” Kudos to Charlie for continuously bringing other program areas together to address hep C and drug user health! One payoff of his efforts has been an ASTHO grant to create a state epi profile!
- **PA DOH wants to expand access to hep C treatment.** While prior authorization requirements for hep C treatment still restrict access, for the most part, to people with fibrosis scores of F2 and above, the state has been working on initiatives to expand access to hepatitis C services.
 - **\$13 million available to treat hep C in individuals who are co-infected with HIV.** PA's Special Pharmaceutical Benefits Program (SPBP) implemented a six-month pilot program on February 1, 2016 to offer coverage of hepatitis C direct acting antivirals to individuals with a dual diagnosis of HIV and hepatitis C who are enrolled in the SPBP. The SPBP is considered payer of last resort. Individuals eligible for or enrolled in other prescription plans must utilize those benefits prior to SPBP. The SPBP will provide coverage of hepatitis C medications for only those individuals enrolled in SPBP and have a co-infection of HIV and hepatitis C.
 - <http://www.health.pa.gov/My%20Health/Diseases%20and%20Conditions/E-H/HIV%20And%20AIDS%20Epidemiology/Pages/Special-Pharmaceutical-Benefits-Program.aspx#.Vxa7FtQrKUJ>
 - **PA DOH is funding of new practice models.** PA DOH recognizes that the separation between addiction services (such as Medically Assisted Treatments like methadone or suboxone) and primary care/health services often do a disservice to patients. In an effort to offer a more coordinated, medical home model of care, the state is offering **50** pilot grants to develop **Opioid Centers of Excellence** with the specific intent of improving care for people dealing with opioid addictions.
 - **30** grants will be distributed to current MAT sites to improve linkage to physical health care
 - **20** grants will be given to health centers to support the addition of MAT services to the menu of resources available to their clients
 - For more information or to apply to for one of these grants visit:

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- <http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/substanceabuseservices/centersofexcellence/index.htm#.Vxa8TNQrKUK>
- **Regional hep C education events are a way to improve the cascade.** Charlie has been hosting regional hepatitis C summits, with an emphasis on the emerging hep C epidemic among young drug users. These summits are a way to educate regional stakeholders, help the state survey regions for hepatitis services, and build informal care networks within each region. These summits have helped elevate the conversation around drug user health in Pennsylvania by building partnerships and bringing together people from the public health and behavioral health/addiction services communities.

Thanks for visiting HepCAP, Charlie! Here's how to contact him:

Charlie Howsare, MD MPH
 Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator
 Room 933, H&W Building, 625 Forster Street
 Harrisburg, PA 17120-0701
 V 717.787.3350 F 717.772.6975
chowsare@pa.gov

HEP C TREATMENT ACCESS AND ADVOCACY

Last year, HepCAP and other PA advocates played an important role in helping make hepatitis C treatment more accessible by removing the sobriety requirement and by getting the fibrosis score moved to F2. However, HepCAP agrees: EVERYONE living with hepatitis C deserves access to treatment – no matter how long they have been infected or how damaged their liver is. The decision of whether a person is ready for treatment is one that should be made between a patient and their medical provider – not by insurance companies or state agencies!

With new hep C treatments available since the last P&T meetings, we think that the negotiated costs of treatment have come down significantly – possibly as low as \$25,000-\$30,000 for an entire course of hep C treatment! Part of the challenge we have as advocates that we do not know how the prices are negotiated or the final cost of treatment. However, we have seen other states like Connecticut and Massachusetts drop their treatment restrictions so we have good reason to believe that the cost of hep C treatment is now low enough to demand access for all.

In May, there are two big opportunities for HepCAP advocates to get involved:

TUESDAY, MAY 17th – Travel to (near) Harrisburg for the P&T Committee Meeting. The P&T committee makes decisions about what drugs to put on the state Medicaid formulary and meets twice a year to pass these decisions. There is an opportunity for stakeholders to present testimony – we want HepCAP partners in the room to show the state that there is demand for broader treatment access!

- Want to testify on why hep C access should be expanded? Register here ASAP:
 - <http://www.providersynergies.com/services/medicaid/Pennsylvania/form.asp?content=Testimony>
- Want to go to Mechanicsburg? Contact Alex: Alexandra.shirreffs@phila.gov or 215-685-6462 and we'll let you know the logistics!

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- Meeting details: Tuesday, May 17; 10:30am to 4pm; The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Center; 403 East Winding Hill Road, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
 - <http://www.dhs.pa.gov/communitypartners/informationforadvocatesandstakeholders/pharmacyandtherapeuticscommittee/#.Vxe4xdQrKU>
- For more information on the role that P&T committees play in making decisions about treatment access, check out an archive of this webinar, *Pricing of Drugs and Formulary Placement: Making Sense of Hepatitis C Treatment*:
 - <https://www.iasusa.org/content/pricing-of-drugs-and-formulary-placement-webinar-2015>

THURSDAY, MAY 19th – Join HepCAP for a Press Conference at City Hall. May is Hepatitis Awareness Month and 5/19 is National Hepatitis Testing Day. Join HepCAP and our partners at Hep B United along with members of City Council for a press conference to raise awareness about hep B and C and the importance of hepatitis testing as a strategy to prevent cancer.

- Event Details: Thurs, May 19; 9-9:30am; City Hall/Dilworth Park; Come and meet O’Liver – our Liver mascot!
- Plan on coming? Email Pavitri -- Pavitri.Dwivedi@hepb.org -- and she will send you details on where to meet!

Other Advocacy Updates

- **Hep on the Hill.** Included with the meeting highlights are slides highlighting a trip HepCAP members recently took to Washington DC. Along with hepatitis advocates from PA and across the US, we visited legislative offices as part of a Hep on the Hill event (sponsored by NVHR, APCHO, and NASTAD). Our main ask was support for an increase to CDC’s budget for the Division of Viral Hepatitis. We also spoke to legislative aides about the opioid drug epidemic and health disparities that affect Asian Americans. Offices visited include:
 - **Senators:** Bob Casey (D), Pat Toomey (R)
 - **Representatives:** Chaka Fattah (D-2), Brendan Boyle (D-13), Michael Fitzpatrick (R-8), Mike Kelly (R-3)
- **National spotlight on Opioid Addiction.** Increasingly, local and national policy makers are stepping up to address the opioid addiction epidemic. This has led to some exciting federal proposals and state policies to take a more public health oriented (and less criminal justice focused) approach to drug use. Attached to the meeting highlights are main points of recent federal policy changes – including an exciting legislative change that makes it possible to use federal funds to support syringe exchange programs.
 - **HepCAP partners in NBC10 Heroin special!** NBC 10 recently produced an excellent prime time documentary and website addressing the opioid epidemic in Philadelphia. After the special, Michael Botticelli, Director of the White House Office on National Drug Policy, came to Philadelphia for a Town Hall, which was also televised. If you are interested in drug user health in Philadelphia, these are must watch programs:

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- **Generation Addicted:** <http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/brchannel/Generation-Addicted-372150102.html>
- **Heroin Town Hall:** <http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/NBC10-Hosts-Community-Forum-on-Heroin-Addiction-Featuring-White-House-Director-of-National-Drug-Control-Policy-Michael-Botticelli-374941651.html>

UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

AIDS Education Month – REGISTER NOW! Hepatitis workshops will be featured at the two main AEM events – come out and support the hep community! Both events are all day and take place at the Convention Center

- **Prison Summit:** Wednesday, **June 15th**
- **Prevention Summit:** Wednesday, **June 22nd**

Sign up for all AEM events and find out more info at www.aidseducationmonth.org

Speak up for Drug User Health! City Council has named 2016 “The Year to Combat the Heroin Abuse Epidemic in Philadelphia.” City Council is sponsoring town hall meetings across the city to hear how drug use is affecting our communities. Speak out about the need for services that address the health of drug users, including access to hep C treatment, naloxone access to prevent overdoses, and training clinicians on skills for working with drug users!

All meetings will be held from 6:30-8:30pm:

- **Monday, April 25:** Northeast Philadelphia ([Kleinlife Center](#), 10100 Jamison Ave)
- **Wednesday, April 27:** Manayunk/Roxborough ([Venice Island Performing Arts & Recreation Center](#), 7 Lock St)
- **Thursday, April 28:** River Wards ([Maritime Academy Charter High School](#), 2700 E Huntingdon St)
- **Monday, May 2:** North Philadelphia ([Philadelphia Recovery Community Center](#), 1701 W Lehigh Ave)
- **Thursday, May 5:** West Philadelphia ([University of the Sciences](#), 636 S 42nd St, PharmTox Building, Room 140)
- **Thursday, May 12:** South Philadelphia ([Palumbo Recreation Center](#), 700 S 9th St)

Upcoming HepCAP Meetings! HepCAP meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every other months at 5:30pm at 500 S. Broad Street):

- *2015 Meetings:* June 1st, Aug 3rd, Oct 5th, Dec 7th

Please contact **Alex Shirreffs** at 215-685-6462 or alexandra.shirreffs@phila.gov if you have edits to these notes or feedback about HepCAP.

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