

Message Box Talking Points for Hepatitis C Education Campaign

PROBLEM/VALUE STATEMENT

We Must Act to Stop the Silent Killer Hepatitis C

- Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease that can destroy people's health and lives. Liver disease, liver cancer and deaths from Hepatitis C are on the rise.
- About 4 million people in the United States have hepatitis C. More than 150,000 people are infected in New Jersey.
- Because hepatitis C often has no symptoms, people can go for decades without finding out they have it. Most people who are infected with hepatitis C don't know it and so the disease progresses untreated and can cause liver damage, cirrhosis, liver cancer, and even death. More people now die from hepatitis C than die from HIV/AIDS in the United States. These deaths are preventable.

SOLUTION/BARRIER MESSAGE

Expand hepatitis C testing

- The CDC recommends that anyone born between 1945 and 1965 get tested for hepatitis C. Three quarters of the people with hepatitis C are in this age group.
- Knowing your hepatitis C status will prevent transmitting the disease to others. Hep C is spread when blood from a person infected with hepatitis C enters the body of an uninfected person. Infection can be transmitted by sharing needles or other drug injection equipment or otherwise coming into contact with the blood of an infected person. Before widespread blood screening, Hepatitis C was also spread through blood transfusions and organ transplants.
- The vast majority of people with hepatitis C don't know it and are at greatly increased risk for liver damage, liver cancer and death. Early diagnosis can improve health outcomes and prevent the more serious consequences of a hepatitis C infection. Most people with hepatitis C can be cured.

ACTION

Launch an education campaign to promote the CDC's recommendations and expand testing to those most at risk

- Educate and encourage those most at risk to get tested for hepatitis C.
- Offer hepatitis C testing to those at greatest risk of being infected. People born between 1945 and 1965 are five times more likely to be infected with hepatitis C than people in other age groups.

VISION/BENEFIT

Expanded testing for hepatitis C will identify those at highest risk, save lives, prevent serious health consequences and reduce medical costs

- According to the CDC, if everyone born between 1945 and 1965 were tested for hepatitis C, more than 800,000 cases would be identified and more than 100,000 lives could be saved.
- Expanded testing would identify hepatitis C infections earlier, preventing the more serious consequences of hepatitis C. Hepatitis C is the leading cause of liver cancer and the most common reason for liver transplantation.
- The development of new treatments for hepatitis C are advancing rapidly. New drugs have fewer side effects and greater cure rates are becoming available. Expanded testing will maximize the benefits of these medical advances and help thousands to live longer and healthier lives.

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(CALL TO ACTION)