



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Viral Hepatitis Partner:

As you may be aware, multiple states across the country have reported outbreaks of person-to-person transmitted hepatitis A virus (HAV) infections, primarily among people who use drugs and people experiencing homelessness. Since 2016, more than 15,000 cases and 8,500 (57%) hospitalizations have been reported. Hospitalization rates have been higher than typically associated with HAV infection. Severe complications have also been reported, sometimes leading to liver transplantation or death. At least 140 deaths have occurred nationwide.

HAV is highly transmissible from person to person. The best way to prevent HAV infection is through vaccination with the hepatitis A vaccine. CDC recommends that health care providers and partners serving people who use drugs and people experiencing homelessness participate in a rapid and effective public health response, including working with state and local health departments to provide education and vaccinate at-risk populations.

Because people who use drugs are at increased risk for HAV infection, syringe services programs (SSPs) provide an important opportunity to engage at-risk individuals when they access those services. Harm reduction organizations are critical partners in responding to these outbreaks because these programs can assist local public health authorities reach vulnerable populations affected by this outbreak. SSPs are encouraged to partner with their local health department to conduct vaccine outreach events.

If you have any questions about the outbreak or want to discuss additional ways you can help the people you serve, please reach out to your local health department or CDC at dvhpolicy@cdc.gov. To support efforts to address hepatitis A, CDC has developed fact sheets and posters to encourage people to get vaccinated. The materials contain an area in which local information can be added and are available at www.cdc.gov/HepAOutbreak.

Sincerely,

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention