

In response to the intersecting opioid and hepatitis C virus (HCV) epidemics, HepConnect, a five-year, multi-million dollar initiative, was launched to help address the increase in HCV infections and support community partnerships in Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia.



AREAS OF FOCUS



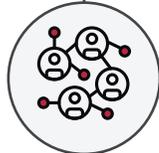
Expand Screening and Linkage to Care

Fight rising HCV infection rates by testing for the virus and ensuring those who need care can access it. HepConnect supports local community partnerships in an effort to address and remove barriers to the continuum of care, using strategies proven to reduce HCV infection rates.



Support Harm Reduction and Community Education

Open doors to harm reduction services to all who need them to help reduce HCV transmission. HepConnect supports community partnerships and prevention programs that implement and expand evidence-based public health interventions, remove barriers to healthcare services and make harm reduction services available to all who need them.



Activate Healthcare Infrastructure

Build resources, know-how and capacity in communities where the need is greatest. HepConnect works to educate and expand the number of healthcare providers, support the implementation of telemedicine to reach people where they are and develop local, highly effective solutions to combat the sharp rise in HCV infection rates.

HCV KEY FACTS

HCV is known as a “silent killer” as almost half of the people living with HCV don’t know they’re infected. If left unchecked, chronic HCV infection can lead to liver failure, liver cancer and even death.¹

2.4 million
Americans are
living with HCV.²

41,000
people were newly
infected with HCV
in 2016.³

**New HCV cases are
predominantly found
among those who are under
the age of 30, Caucasian
and who live in rural areas.**⁴

**The CDC reports that
HCV kills more Americans than
any other infectious disease.**⁵

^{1,2} <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hcv/cfaq.htm#overview>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/statistics/2016surveillance/pdfs/2016HepSurveillanceRpt.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6417a2.htm>

⁵ Rising Mortality Associated With Hepatitis C Virus in the United States, 2003–2013

Kentucky's Growing Hep C Crisis

- Opioid use costs Kentucky an estimated **\$10 billion** annually and has led to a dramatic increase in Hep C infections.
- Approximately **43,000** Kentuckians live with Hep C, and many don't know they are infected.
- Kentucky saw **nearly 300 deaths** related to Hep C in 2016.

Together We Can Address the Hep C Epidemic

HepConnect and Harm Reduction Coalition

HepConnect has partnered with Harm Reduction Coalition (HRC), which will connect and support local health organizations throughout greater Appalachia working to address harm reduction needs.

HepConnect and HRC partners will develop and implement an action plan in collaboration with local partners in each of HepConnect's five target states. Key objectives of the partnership include:

- Strategic implementation of harm reduction programs that address HCV
- Building stakeholder and community support through outreach and education

Harm Reduction Coalition will engage people who use drugs and community stakeholders through community listening sessions and individual consultations to inform priority areas for the funding announcement to be released in early Summer 2019.