HEPATITIS C OUTBREAK

RESPONSE CHECKLIST

Determine whether a hepatitis C outbreak is occurring. (See Outbreak Detection and
Outbreak Investigation). For hepatitis C, there are two sets of criteria for defining an outbreak, based on:
 Rates of acute cases of HCV or clusters of acute HCV (Table 2) Rates of chronic HCV in persons under the age of 30 (Table 3)
Determine the type of response and level of response needed based on the <u>Tiered Response Plan</u>
Review criteria for establishing an incident management team (IMT)
Identify internal and external stakeholders (See Internal Partners and External Partners).
Develop a communications plan and develop messages for populations at risk, general public, the media, and health department leadership and local and state government partners (see Communications)
 Define strategies to perform targeted HCV screening, treatment and provision of harm reduction counseling and supplies. (See Prevention and Control Measures) For identified HCV cases, offer confirmatory RNA testing, pretreatment assessment, linkage to care and additional screening as indicated For syringe-sharing contacts, over HCV antibody screening and harm reduction supplies/education Procure adequate supplies of HAV and HBV vaccine and facilitate distribution. Estimate the number of vaccine doses needed by adding the number of identified HCV cases, and assume 3 syringe-sharing contacts per case who may also be eligible for vaccination. Ensure a culturally competent and trauma-informed approach to working with high-risk and priority populations
Post outbreak activities • Define the end of the outbreak

- Plan to continue vaccination of high-risk populations
- After action evaluation



Investigative Guidelines January 2023

1. DISEASE REPORTING

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish best practices for identifying and responding to clusters of hepatitis C virus (HCV). However, depending on the setting and magnitude of the suspected cluster, consideration must be given to the resources available. OHA Viral Hepatitis Program (VHP) and Health Security Preparedness and Response (HSPR) staff will discuss with the affected Local Public Health Authorities (LPHAs) whether it will be possible to fully implement these recommendations for all suspected outbreaks of HCV.

1.2 Transmission

HCV is the most common bloodborne infection in the United States. Percutaneous exposure is the most efficient mode of HCV transmission, and injection drug use (IDU) is the primary risk factor for infection. Mucous membrane exposures to blood also can result in transmission, although this route is less efficient. HCV can be detected in saliva, semen, breast milk, and other body fluids, although these body fluids are not believed to be efficient vehicles of transmission (See Table 1 for quick facts on HCV).

Table 1. HCV Quick Facts				
Causative agent	Small, single-stranded enveloped RNA virus in flavivirus family			
Signs and symptoms	Typically asymptomatic, but may present with fever, headache, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, dark urine, grey-colored stools, joint pain, and jaundice			
Transmission	 Percutaneous exposure to infected blood is the most efficient mode of HCV transmission Mucous membrane exposures to blood also can result in transmission, although this route is less efficient 			

Infactions Davied (times	 HCV can be detected in saliva, semen, breast milk, and other body fluids; these body fluids are not believed to be efficient vehicles of transmission Perinatal transmission is an important route of transmission
Infectious Period (time from exposure to	 As soon as 1–2 weeks after exposure, although most people do not experience symptoms
symptoms)	Individuals who are HCV RNA positive are considered infectious
Incubation period (time from exposure to symptoms)	2–12 weeks
Laboratory Diagnosis	HCV RNA appears in the blood 1–2 weeks after exposure, and HCV antibodies can be detected 4–10 weeks after exposure and as late as 6 months after exposure
Prevention	Harm reduction measures (use of clean needles, syringes, rinse water) to minimize the risk of spread through injection drug use
	Strict adherence to standard precautions and other infection control practices in healthcare settings
	3) Use of condoms can prevent the minimal risk of sexual transmission
	4) Not sharing personal items that might have blood on them, such as toothbrushes, dental appliances, razors, nail clippers, glucose meters, and lancet devices
Treatment	Although initial regimens were often ineffective and carried a high risk of serious adverse events, DAAs are better tolerated and have much improved effectiveness
	Approximately 90% of HCV-infected persons can be cured of infection with 8–12 weeks of therapy, regardless of genotype, prior treatment experience, fibrosis level, or presence of cirrhosis

1.3 Clinical Presentation

Persons with acute HCV infection are typically either asymptomatic or have a mild clinical illness like other types of viral hepatitis. Jaundice might occur in 20%–30% of persons, and nonspecific symptoms (e.g., anorexia, malaise, or abdominal pain) might be present in 10%–20% of persons. The average time

from exposure to symptom onset is 2–12 weeks (range: 2–26 weeks). <u>HCV</u> antibodies (anti-HCV) can be detected 4–10 weeks after infection and are present in approximately 97% of persons by 6 months after exposure. HCV RNA can be detected as early as 1–2 weeks after exposure and indicates that the individual is infectious.

Historically, approximately 15%–25% of persons were believed to resolve their acute infection without sequelae. However, more recent data suggest that spontaneous clearance might be as high as 46%, with higher rates of clearance among those who are younger, female, symptomatic at the time of initial infection, and not co-infected with hepatitis B virus (HBV). The course of chronic liver disease progresses slowly without symptoms or physical signs in most persons during the first 20 years or more following infection. Approximately 5%–25% of persons with chronic HCV will develop cirrhosis over 10–20 years, and those with cirrhosis have a 1%–4% annual risk for hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC).

1.4 Current rates and epidemiology

The <u>annual rate of reported acute HCV in the U.S. tripled</u> from 2009 to 2018 and was highest among persons aged 20–39 years. In 2018, the largest proportion of chronic HCV cases occurred among persons aged 20–39 years and 50–69 years. Epidemics of opioid and methamphetamine use have fueled the increased risk of transmission of bloodborne viruses such as HCV and HIV through injection drug use, particularly in rural and suburban settings.

Outbreaks of HCV have also occurred in healthcare settings in recent years. Considering the differences between the risk factors, methods of case investigation, personnel, and partnerships needed for investigation and control, OHA will outline in a separate guideline the management of healthcare-associated outbreaks of viral hepatitis.

1.5 Screening and treatment

No vaccine against HCV exists, and no effective pre- or postexposure prophylaxis (e.g., immune globulin) is available. Previous CDC strategies for HCV screening based on risk factors have largely been ineffective. In 2016, only 56% of adults with HCV knew that they were infected. Therefore, the CDC implemented a universal testing strategy in 2020, which recommended a one-time testing of all adults over 18 years of age, testing of pregnant women with each pregnancy, and periodic screening of persons who inject drugs (PWIDs).

The treatment for HCV infection has evolved substantially in the last decade since the introduction of direct-acting antiviral agents (DAAs). DAA therapy is better tolerated, of shorter duration, and more effective than interferon-based regimens used in the past. The antivirals for HCV treatment include next-generation DAAs, categorized as either protease inhibitors, nucleoside analog polymerase inhibitors, or nonstructural (NS5A) protein inhibitors. Many agents are pangenotypic, meaning they have antiviral activity against all genotypes. Approximately 90% of HCV-infected persons can be cured of HCV infection with

8–12 weeks of therapy, regardless of HCV genotype, prior treatment experience, fibrosis level, or presence of cirrhosis.

2. OUTBREAK DETECTION

2.1 Outbreak Criteria

To determine whether public health interventions beyond routine case investigation and control methods are required, the OHA will apply criteria that consider whether the increases occur among acute or chronic cases (Tables 2 and 3).

On a monthly basis, the VHP Medical Director, Hepatitis Epidemiologist, and Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator (VHPC) will review acute cases of HCV that have been reported to Orpheus, ACDP's surveillance database. Table 2 outlines the thresholds for launching an outbreak investigation based on the number of acute cases and the number of syringe-sharing contacts they have. Since acute cases are rare, the threshold for elevating to a Tier 2 or Tier 3 response, which will require contacting syringe-sharing contacts of cases, will be lower than for launching an outbreak investigation into chronic cases of HCV infection.

Table 2. Tiered response plan based on surveillance for acute HCV					
Tier	Level of Response	Need for IMT	Communications plan		
I. Sporadic cases (baseline)	Routine case investigation of acute cases	None	Routine posting of surveillance data on OHA website		
II. Any acute case with 3 or more needle sharing contacts Or 2 acute cases in single county Or 2 acute cases in different jurisdictions with epi links	 As part of case investigation, if a case reports injection drug use in past 6 months, inquire about number of syringe-sharing contacts in past 6 months Obtain contact information for exposed persons and attempt to notify syringe-sharing contacts of their exposure and offer HCV testing, harm reduction counseling. 	VHP medical director notifies ACDP section manager and Health Security, Preparedness, and Response (HSPR) manager Together, they consider need for incident management team (IMT) response	OHA public health information officer (PIO) assigned to the response will: establish contact with LPHAs, disseminate plain language information about HCV to cases and contacts in affected settings (as applicable), and consider need for press release in collaboration with LPHA		

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within a 4-	and HAV and HBV		
week period	vaccination		
0"	 If resources permit, 		
Or	consider HIV/STI		
A single case	(particularly syphilis)		
of acute HCV	testing of cases and		
	contacts, linkage to		
acquired in a	infectious disease		
carceral or	care, as well as		
residential	referral for		
setting	medication for opioid		
	use disorder (MOUD)		
	and substance use		
	disorder (SUD)		
	treatment		
III. 3 or more	Continue follow up of	VHP medical director	OHA PIO activates
epi-linked	acute cases and	consults with ACDP	communications plan,
cases in a 4-	screening of exposed		•
	contacts, broaden	section manager,	prepares press releases,
week period	screening program to	HSPR, Oregon	plans social media
	include high risk	Immunization	campaign, provides
	groups (not just	Program (OIP) on	updates to OHA
		scope of IMT	leadership and other key
	contacts), and consult with CDC	response	stakeholders
	about the need to		
	obtain specimens for		
	genotyping and		
	sequencing		
	Do the following:		
	mobilize additional		
	resources to offer		
	screening (including		
	HIV, syphilis, and		
	other STIs) and		
	linkage to care to		
	individuals who		
	screen positive;		
	increase public and		
	provider awareness		
	of the importance of		
	screening and the		
	availability of highly		
	effective treatment;		
	broadly promote		
	harm reduction		
	measures; promote		

HAV and HBV vaccination of cases and their contacts; and increase awareness of local resources for MOUD and SUD treatment	
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Because most acute cases of HCV in Oregon are not reported to OHA, trends in the incidence of chronic cases of HCV infection will help identify regions of the state with increases in HCV transmission (See Table 3).

The basic approach will be to monitor rates of cases reported with chronic HCV under the age of 30 years. This age group often acquires HCV through injection drug use and likely represents recently acquired HCV, since most people acquire HCV from drug use within 2-3 years of initiation. Since reports of chronic cases in persons under age 30 years are common, any recommendations to interview chronic cases under the age of 30 will be considered a Tier 2 response and will likely require assistance from OHA. If high numbers of cases are found among people reporting recent injection drug use and multiple syringe-sharing contacts, the response will be upgraded to Tier 3.

Additionally, the VHP Program Medical Director and VHP Epidemiologist will attend monthly meetings of the HIV cluster review team to exchange information about recent surveillance trends and maintain situational awareness of trends in transmission of bloodborne pathogens

Table 3. Tiered response plan based on surveillance for <i>chronic</i> HCV					
Tier	Level of Response	Need for IMT	Communications plan		
I. Monthly rates of chronic cases in persons < 30 years are within baseline	 Routine case investigation of acute cases only If resources are available, consider conducting interviews of sample of chronic cases under 30 years. 	None	Routine posting of surveillance data on OHA website		
II. Occurrence of a rise in the number of chronic cases in persons under 30 years in a jurisdiction more than two standard deviations	Conduct enhanced surveillance of persons with chronic HCV infection under 30 years, consisting of either medical record review or interview of cases, with the goal of	VHP medical director notifies ACDP section manager	OHA PIO assigned to the response establishes contact with LPHA PIO, disseminates plain language information about HCV to cases		

above the monthly average from the previous 3 years Or Cases of HCV infection found during HIV or HBV outbreak Or Time/space cluster detection noted	determining how many have injected drugs in the past 6 months and their numbers of syringe-sharing contacts (Appendix A) • For interviewed cases, provide harm reduction counseling, HAV and HBV vaccination, testing for HIV, syphilis and other STIs, as well as linkage to infectious disease and MOUD/SUD treatment	and HSPR manager, who considers need for IMT response	and contacts in affected settings as applicable, and considers need for press release in collaboration with LPHA
III. High prevalence of HCV infection (>30%) in persons who inject drugs undergoing screening for HCV infection in settings serving individuals at high risk, such as syringe service programs (SSPs) and opioid treatment programs (OTPs)	 Interview chronic HCV cases of any age identified in venues with high prevalence of HCV infection and offer HCV screening to syringesharing contacts of cases Will need to mobilize additional resources to offer screening and linkage to care to individuals who screen positive, increase public and provider awareness of the importance of screening and the availability of highly effective treatment, broadly promote harm reduction measures and HAV and HBV vaccination, and increase awareness of local resources for MOUD and SUD treatment 	VHP medical director consults with ACDP section manager, HSPR, OIP who will consider scope of IMT response	OHA PIO activates communications plan, prepares press releases, plans social media campaign, provides updates to OHA leadership and other key stakeholders

3. OUTBREAK INVESTIGATION

3.1 Case definition

The case definition for acute HCV (<u>Appendix B</u>) requires both laboratory evidence of HCV and acute onset of symptoms of viral hepatitis or symptoms of acute hepatitis combined with a history of exposure to a confirmed case. In the setting of an outbreak, it is also useful to further specify which cases are considered part of an outbreak by defining a particular time frame, geographic area, or risk group. For instance, an isolated case residing in a county outside the geographic area affected by an outbreak would not be included in cases counts for the outbreak and would not impact whether an outbreak is considered "over."

The case definition for chronic HCV (<u>Appendix C</u>) is largely based on laboratory findings since these individuals are rarely contacted for interview. Review of medical and laboratory records can be helpful in distinguishing acute from chronic cases.

3.2 Case finding

Following investigative guidelines, all reports from clinicians of cases of acute HCV will be investigated by the LPHA within one week. LPHA staff will complete the standard acute HCV case report form (Appendix D) and submit all case data electronically to Orpheus. Additionally, if resources allow, jurisdictions may elect to interview or review medical records of cases of chronic HCV in persons under the age of 30 who have positive laboratory markers for HCV.

During an outbreak investigation, OHA and LPHA staff may also implement more active case finding methods by alerting local clinicians, hospitals, emergency departments, and locations where cases have been identified (i.e., carceral settings, homeless shelters or camps, agencies providing harm reduction services to PWIDs) to notify the LPHA of suspected cases prior to laboratory confirmation. As described above in Tables 2 and 3, cases will be asked about syringe-sharing partners who should be contacted and offered screening to identify additional cases.

3.3 Case characterization and interviews

The standard acute HCV case report form will be used as a starting point for interviews during outbreaks and includes demographic factors (including collection of REALD), complications of HCV such as hospitalization and death, and history of vaccination. It will also include the following risk factors: pregnancy; sexual exposures; history of injection drug use (including number of needle-sharing contacts); healthcare exposures such as hospitalization or surgery; receipt of blood transfusion or other blood products; use of renal dialysis; use of shared blood glucose monitor; residence in a congregate setting; occupational exposures; as well as recent incarceration.

Additionally, interviews with the initial cases may suggest additional risk factors or locations associated with the outbreak that should be incorporated into subsequent interviews. For example, it will be important to collect additional information about cases residing in congregate settings and homeless shelters and camps, and whether cases share injection supplies. ACDP informatics or epidemiology staff will add supplemental questions to the HCV disease module in Orpheus, enabling LPHA and OHA staff to immediately begin asking these questions and entering the data into Orpheus.

If criteria for Tier 2 or 3 for chronic cases of HCV are met, then the LPHA (with OHA assistance) will begin conducting interviews with chronic cases using the brief interview form for chronic cases (see Appendix A). This form explores history of injection drug use and numbers of needle-sharing contacts, which will guide control measures, such as notifying needle sharing contacts of their exposure and offering them screening.

3.4 Case reporting

To improve case ascertainment, OHA will employ such methods as the Health Alert Network (HAN) to notify providers and LPHAs of an outbreak of HBV and encourage prompt reporting. Notifications may also be sent through EpiX if the Oregon outbreak involves cases residing in other states. OHA will also disseminate information about the outbreak and encourage reporting from settings indicated by the epidemiology of the initial cases, such as homeless shelters and camps, carceral settings, syringe service programs (SSPs), SUD treatment centers, or healthcare settings.

3.5 Contact tracing

Once criteria for Tier 2 or 3 for acute cases of HCV is met (Table 2), LPHA investigators should identify and notify syringe-sharing contacts of acute cases to notify them of the exposure, provide HCV screening, offer HAV and HBV vaccines where applicable, and provide harm reduction counseling. If a patient is unwilling or unable to provide the name or contact information for their syringe-sharing contacts, convey the importance of screening contacts and share the health department's contact information. If resources permit, consider HAV and HBV vaccination of cases and their contacts, HIV/STI (particularly syphilis) testing of cases and contacts, and linkage to infectious disease and medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD)/SUD treatment.

Similarly, once criteria for Tier 2 or 3 for chronic cases of HCV are met (Table 3), if resources permit, LPHA investigators should identify and notify syringe-sharing contacts of chronic cases to notify them of the exposure, offer HCV screening and HAV and HBV vaccination, and provide harm reduction counseling. If resources permit, offer HIV/STI (particularly syphilis) testing of cases and contacts, as well as linkage to infectious disease and MOUD/SUD treatment.

3.6 Lab testing

Initial screening for HCV infection should start with an antibody test, which determines whether the individual has ever been exposed to HCV. Any FDA-approved test suffices if phlebotomy services are available. A useful alternative in outreach settings is the OraQuick® Rapid Antibody Test, which requires only a fingerstick and provides a test result in 20 minutes. To confirm whether the individual is viremic, meaning that they are currently carrying the virus and can infect others, obtain an HCV RNA test by polymerase chain reaction (PCR).

Serological testing for HCV can be performed at the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory (OSPHL) but is also widely available in clinical labs. OSPHL performs an enzyme immunoassay (EIA) test and sends serum to the Michigan Department of Public Health Laboratories if needed for HCV RNA testing.

EIA and RNA tests are ordered using the <u>Virology/Immunology request form</u> by checking off the appropriate box under "Tests Requested." OSPHL can perform these tests on any working day and generally provides results in three days. OSPHL's <u>Specimen Transport Manifest</u> ensures that OSPHL receives all the specimens sent.

During a suspected or ongoing HCV outbreak, molecular testing can be useful in establishing a common source of infection and identifying transmission linkages. CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis molecular testing lab can use next-generation sequencing (NGS) to detect cases sharing similar HCV strains. OHA can coordinate submission of specimens from cases with positive RNA testing to CDC for NGS/GHOST testing.

4. OUTBREAK RESPONSE

4.1 Roles

LPHA communicable disease staff and OHA VHP staff in ACDP will likely be the first public health staff aware of the outbreak. They will take the initial steps to determine whether the criteria for an outbreak have been met and decide on a preliminary course of action. As needed, additional staffing will be drawn from the list of internal and external partners listed below.

Table 3. Internal Partners

Public Health Division partners involved in hepatitis outbreak responses

- LPHA health officer, administrator, communicable disease staff
- ACDP VHP staff and members of Urgent Epi Response Team (UERT) as needed
- ACDP Healthcare-Acquired Infection (HAI) Program if transmission in a healthcare setting is documented
- Immunization Program
- HSPR
 - o Serv-OR volunteers
 - Public Information Officer

- Oregon State Public Health Laboratory
- Office of Equity and Inclusion
- HIV/STI/Tuberculosis Program

Other OHA or Department of Human Services (DHS) divisions or offices

- OHA Behavioral Health
- OHA Medicaid program
- PHD Community Engagement Team
- HSPR Regional Emergency Coordinators (RECs)

Oregon recognizes that culturally and linguistically appropriate responses to complex public health problems requires investment in communities, partnership across state agencies, and local and regional strategies to address community priorities. The Oregon Legislature has provided significant support to local public health, tribal agencies, and healthcare partners to fully integrate public health, health care and community-level health improvement efforts.

Where available, LPHAs should reach out to Peer Recovery in Medical Establishment (PRIME+) agencies to engage with peers who routinely conduct outreach to PWUDs. Additional external partners that could be involved in the response to an outbreak of HCV are listed below.

Table 4. External Partners

- Tribal public health authorities
- Community-based organizations serving populations at high risk for HCV
- Homeless service providers
- Mental or behavioral health service providers
- Syringe service programs (SSP)s and other sites providing harm reduction services
- PRIME+ partners, and other agencies employing peer support specialists
- Coordinated care organizations (CCOs), federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), emergency departments, other community healthcare and academic partners
- Emergency medical services (EMS)
- County-level Office of Emergency Management
- Retail pharmacies
- Corrections, including state corrections, community-corrections, local/municipal jails and youth detention facilities
- Faith-based organizations
- Law enforcement
- State and local government

4.2 Initiating and mounting a Response-Incident Management Team

Once a cluster of cases or an increase above historical levels is detected, the VHP Medical Director or VHP Hepatitis Epidemiologist will notify the ACDP

section manager and the OIP of the outbreak. The VHP Medical Director, the VHP Hepatitis Epidemiologist, the VHPC and OIP will attend all LPHA cluster response meetings.

The VHP will update the HSPR program of the current situation. This is generally conveyed to the Public Health Duty Officer or the HSPR manager. The Public Health Duty Officer, in consultation with ACDP and HSPR leadership, may be asked to convene a Health Intelligence Briefing (HIB). Present at this briefing are internal partners and OHA leadership. The status of the outbreak and predicted outcomes and actions will be evaluated. If the current outbreak can be managed by ACDP and the LPHA, no further action will be taken. If additional resources and oversight are required to manage the outbreak, an IMT will be activated. An IMT would likely be needed if the threshold for a Tier 3 response is met, or the magnitude or morbidity/mortality associated with the outbreak dictates the need for a large and coordinated response.

Typically, decisions about the need, size, and scope of the IMT will be made by OIP and HSPR in consultation with the VHP Medical Director at the HIB. A public information officer (PIO) will also be assigned to the cluster response and coordinate communication between the LPHA, ACDP, and public health leadership. Multiple staff members in ACDP, along with partners in Immunization, HSPR, and other OHA programs, are trained in incident management and will staff an incident management team. In addition to VHP staff, ACDP's UERT will provide epidemiologic and IT staff, and the IMT may recruit additional assistance from HSPR, HST, or OIP staff as needed. The Incident Manager will take a lead role in coordinating planning and logistics of an IMT.

4.3 Local Public Health Authority (LPHA)

In Oregon, the LPHA is the health authority. Unless the LPHA defers responsibility to OHA or more than one county is involved, the LPHA will be tasked with organizing an incident command team and coordinating the cluster response. OHA staff will work closely with the LPHA Health Officer and communicable disease staff to provide technical assistance and support the response.

The respective LPHA(s), with the support and guidance from ACDP OHA staff, will be responsible for enlisting the assistance of local stakeholders, organizations, and community groups to aid in a culturally respectful response. If requested, OHA staff will be available to assist LPHA needs with case investigations and contact tracing, media communications, and prevention and control efforts (i.e., HCV screening and linkage to care, vaccination against HAV and HBV).

4.4 Epidemiologic Support

Key responsibilities of OHA epi staff include revising the hepatitis disease module in Orpheus as needed; analyzing and summarizing data; editing investigative guidelines; drafting additional guidance as needed; and providing

technical assistance for management of special situations and settings (carceral setting or other congregate care facilities; assessment of risk of spread in healthcare settings; outbreak involving PWIDs).

Although case and contact investigations are the primary responsibility of the LPHA, the magnitude of the outbreak or competing priorities may require OHA epi staff to assist with case and contact investigations.

4.5 Communications

A PIO will take the lead in developing a communications plan for keeping key stakeholders informed of developments in the outbreak. The target audiences for risk communication strategy will be include populations at risk, the public, and the media, as well as health department leadership and local and state government partners. The basic list of products includes the following:

- Templates for press releases for OHA, LPHAs or other community partners
- Plain language materials for the public
- Plan for social media campaign
- Targeted health education material for high-risk persons and identified cases, such as how to clean syringes and use bleach effectively, locations of SSPs and availability of testing and vaccination services

We may also use the following communication tools to inform community and healthcare partners of the outbreak:

- Oregon's Health Alert Network
- Dear Colleague letter to clinicians
- PHD Office of LPHA Liaisons for LPHA Communications
- The CD Summary a monthly publication of the OHA, Public Health Division. Its intended audience is licensed health care providers, public health and health care agencies, media representatives, medical laboratories, hospitals, and others with an interest in epidemiology and public health
- PRIME+ agencies, which can help disseminate information to high-risk populations
- Basecamp for the Viral Hepatitis Collective—a network of stakeholders engaged in viral hepatitis elimination planning

2. PREVENTION AND CONTROL MEASURES

5.1 Outreach to Cases and Exposed Contacts

A community-based outbreak of HCV will require prompt implementation of screening services and actions to ensure linkage to care with direct-acting antiviral medications, along with counseling about harm reduction measures to prevent further spread.

For *identified cases of HCV*, the primary needs include counseling about harm reduction measures to prevent further spread, confirmatory RNA testing by PCR, additional pre-treatment workup to assess whether cirrhosis is present (because

it impacts treatment strategy), and referral to a provider knowledgeable about the treatment of HCV (primary care provider or a specialist in gastroenterology or infectious diseases). Attempts should also be made to offer screening for HIV and STIs, particularly syphilis, vaccination against HAV and HBV, and appropriate referrals to medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment.

For **syringe-sharing contacts** of cases, the immediate need is screening for antibodies to HCV, along with counseling about harm reduction. Even if negative for HCV, individuals who inject drugs should be offered screening for HIV and STIs (particularly syphilis), vaccination against HAV and HBV, and appropriate referrals to MOUD and SUD treatment. If contacts are positive, then they should be interviewed using the case report form so that their needle-sharing contacts can be notified of exposure.

5.2 Reaching priority populations

The populations at highest risk for HCV infection during these ongoing outbreaks can be challenging to reach with traditional education efforts due to a variety of factors including behavioral health issues, lack of engagement with the healthcare system and other institutions, as well as lack of transportation. LPHAs and healthcare providers will need to employ additional measures to reach these populations.

Potential measures include:

- Notify community healthcare providers of the outbreak and the need for expanded efforts to screen for HCV, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), linkage of patients to appropriate treatment for any identified infections, and vaccinations for HAV and HBV
- Identify local clinicians and clinics who have the capacity to treat HIV and HCV to facilitate referrals for treatment
- Involve partners in the outbreak response who already interact with the at-risk population, including corrections, hospitals, community clinics, law enforcement, local governments, and others
- Seek out partners who consistently interact with individuals at risk for HCV in a trusted manner: PRIME+ agencies, syringe service programs, homeless providers, substance use programs, faith organizations, and communitybased agencies serving immigrants and communities of color
- Plan field screening and vaccination events in areas frequented by individuals most at risk for HCV infection. To identify these areas, collaborate with partners who can provide expertise in:
 - Local epidemiology (i.e., identify areas where cases have been found to prioritize location of screening/vaccination events)
 - Local populations of PWUDs (i.e., identify areas where people who use drugs access services or receive healthcare)
 - Local access to impacted community gatekeepers

Potential partners and sites that can host screening and vaccination events include syringe service programs, carceral settings and community corrections, emergency departments, SUD treatment providers, homeless services providers, mental health programs that serve people who inject drugs, faith-based organizations, parks, libraries, facilities that issue social service benefits, and facilities serving veterans.

3. POST OUTBREAK ACTIVITIES

6.1 Define the End of the Outbreak

Decisions about de-escalating the response will be based on declining case rates in affected populations and meeting vaccination targets in high-risk populations identified during the outbreak.

6.2 Plan for continued screening and vaccination of at-risk populations

- Continue to promote screening of high-risk populations in the following areas: healthcare settings and SUD/OTPs; and outreach settings where resources for rapid HCV screening may be available, such as SSPs, PRIME+ sites, homeless shelters and camps, and community-based organizations
- Continue to promote HAV and HBV vaccination to high-risk populations in healthcare clinics, pharmacies, dentists, sexually transmitted infections clinics, and public health agencies, as well as by non-traditional vaccine providers such as PRIME+ agencies and SUD/OTPs

6.3 After-action evaluation and report

VHP staff will survey local and community partners who assisted in the response regarding:

- The structure of the response
- Communication between OHA, internal and external partners
- What went right?
- What could have gone better?
- What service gaps exist?
- Did we accomplish what we set out to do?

VHP and HSPR will convene a meeting (a hotwash) with key partners to solicit feedback around the strengths and challenges of response related to:

- Components of the cluster investigation that yielded the most useful information
- Data sources that were the most useful
- Staffing/resources needed for the investigation and intervention activities
- Partnerships that were the most effective, and which could benefit from additional development
- Costs associated with cluster investigation
- Costs associated with the intervention

Findings from the partner survey and hotwash meeting will be used to compile an after-action report. This report will include a list of recommendations outlining areas of improvement in the response planning and execution, the impact of any short-term changes to policies or protocols during the response and whether those changes should be adopted as standard practice.

4. RESOURCES

General

- Hofmeister MG, Rosenthal EM, Barker LK, et al. <u>Estimating prevalence of hepatitis C virus infection in the United States</u>, 2013–2016. Hepatology 2019;69:1020–31.
- Kim H, Yang J, El-Serag HB, Kanwal F. <u>Awareness of chronic viral hepatitis in the United States: an update from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey</u>. J Viral Hepat 2019;26:596-602.
- HCV guidance: recommendations for testing, managing, and treating hepatitis C.
 AASLD/IDSA 2021.
- <u>Step-by-step instructions for OraQuick HCV Rapid Antibody Test</u>, OraSure Technologies

OHA

- Model Immunization Protocol ("standing orders") for Hepatitis A, 2021
- Hepatitis A Vaccine Information Statement (VIS)
- Pediatric HBV vaccination standing orders
- Adult HBV vaccination standing orders
- Pharmacy Protocol for pediatric hepatitis B vaccination
- Pharmacy Protocol for adult hepatitis B vaccination
- Hepatitis B Vaccine Information Sheet
- OSPHL Virology/Immunology Request Form
- OSPHL Specimen Transport Manifest

CDC resources

- Surveillance for Viral Hepatitis—United States, 2017.
- CDC Recommendations for hepatitis C screening among adults—United States, 2020.

Public Health Modernization

- Public Health Resilience, Response and Recovery, 2021.
- Public Health Modernization Manual: foundational capabilities and programs for public health in Oregon, 2017.

UPDATE LOG

July 2022. Created (Thomas. A)

ACRONYMS

ACDP: Acute and Communicable Disease Prevention

CCOs: Coordinated Care Organizations

DAAs: Direct Acting Antivirals

DHS: Department of Human Services EIA: Enzyme Immunoassay Test EMS: Emergency Medical Services HAI: Healthcare-Acquired Infection

HAN: Health Alert Network HBV: Hepatitis B Virus

HCC: Hepatocellular Carcinoma

HCV: Hepatitis C Virus

HIB: Health Intelligence Briefing HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HSPR: Health Security Preparedness and Response

IDU: Injection Drug Use

IMT: Incident Management Team Response

LPHA: Local Public Health Authority

MOUD: Medication for Opioid Use Disorder

OIP: Oregon Immunization Program
OSPHL: Oregon State Public Health Lab

OTP: Opioid Treatment Program PCR: Polymerase Chain Reaction PIO: Public Information Officer

PRIME+: Peer recovery in medical establishments

PWID: People Who Inject Drugs

MOUD: Mediation for Opioid Use Disorder RECs: Regional Emergency Coordinators

RNA: Ribonucleic Acid

SSP: Syringe Service Programs SUD: Substance Use Disorder UERT: Urgent Epi Response Team

VHP: Viral Hepatitis Program

VHPC: Viral Hepatitis Prevention Coordinator

Appendix A: Brief	case report form for cases <	30 years of age		
Brief HCV	form	ORPHEUS	☐ Confirmed ☐ Presumptive	☐ Suspect ☐ No case
Name			County	
LAST, First Initials	AKA			
Address	City	State Zip	Special housing	g □ Homeless shelter
Phone number	/		Asst Living ☐ Homeless	☐ Job Corps ☐ Treatment center
home (H), w	ork (W), cell (C), message (M) home (H),	work (W), cell (C), message (M)	□ Prison	☐ Migrant farm
E-mail			☐ Jail ☐ Foster home	☐ No address on file☐ Other (specify)
ALTERNATE CONTACT _			☐ Hospital ☐ Drug treatment	
Name	Ph	one(s)	shelter	
LAST, First Initials	Ph	home (H), work (W), cell (C),	mes-	
DEMOGRAPHICS				
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			_	14 L 51410
Language	Count	ry of birth	□ refugee	
Past year housing (check	one) ☐ Stably housed ☐ Homele	ess 🛘 Unstably housed	☐ Declined ☐ Unknow	/n
Worksites/school/day care	e center	Occupation/gra	de	
•	NGUAGE, AND DISABILITY (REALD			
	ace, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, count t describes your racial or ethnic ider ASIAN) Middle Eastern	
Alaska Native	☐ Asian Indian	Pacific Islander	Northern Africa	n
☐ American Indian☐ Alaska Native	☐ Chinese	☐ Guamanian☐ Chamorro	□ Northern Afric □ Middle Easter	
☐ Canadian Inuit, Metis	□ Filipino/a □ Hmong	☐ Micronesian/Marsha	1	1
First Nation	☐ Japanese	lese/Palaun (COFA)	Whita	ean
☐ Indigenous Mexican Central American	□ Korean □ Laotian	□ Native Hawaiian□ Samoan	☐ Slavic	Can
South American	☐ South Asian	☐ Tongan	☐ Western Europ	oean
HISPANIC or Latino/a/x	□ Vietnamese	☐ Other Pacific Islande		
☐ Central American	☐ Other Asian	Black or	Other Categorie ☐ Other (please	
☐ Mexican☐ South American	If you selected more than one racial orethnic identity, circle the one that best	African American □ African American	U Other (please	
☐ Other Hispanic	represents your racial or ethnic identity. If you have more than one, primary	☐ African (Black)	☐ Don't know	
or Latino/a/x	racial or ethnic identity, please check here.	☐ Caribbean (Black)	☐ Don't want to a	answer
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		Long-term acute care—		
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☐ Ok to contact patient (or Local Epi				
Date report received by LH	D / / LHD completi	ion date / /	State completion date	



Date of blood draw / /	
total anti-HAV	
HBsAg	
IgM anti-HBc	
total anti-HBc	
anti-HBs	
HBV DNA (PCR)	
HBeAg	
HBeAg	
anti-HCV	
Cut-off ratio HCV RNA (PCR)	
HCV RNA (PCR) HCV genotype Upper limit normal (list reference value from lab slips) ALT (SGPT) AST (SGOT)	
Upper limit normal (list reference value from lab slips) ALT (SGPT) AST (SGOT)	
Upper limit normal (list reference value from lab slips) ALT (SGPT) AST (SGOT)	
ALT (SGPT) AST (SGOT)	
RISKS terviewed □ yes □ no Interview date: Interview date:	rviewed by
/ho □ patient □ provider □ parent □ other	
eason not interviewed (choose one) I not indicated □ unable to reach □ out of jurisdiction □ deceased	
I refused □ physician interview □ medical record review	
D physician interview D medical record review	
EXPOSURE RISKS	
heck all that apply.	

CASE'S NAME

				CASE'S NAME		
□ □ □ □ Patient so □ □ □ □ Has the co □ □ □ □ □ Has the co □ lf yes, da □ □ □ □ □ Is the case	case ever had he case ever been te(s)// case ever been te(s)// se insured? ucation provided or this case?	for chror cation properties vaccina vaccina vaccina vaccina d? If ye.	rescribed by on A or B? ted for hepati // ted for hepati// s, date/	doctor for chronic hepat itis A? itis B?	itis C?	
CONTACT MANAGEMI Ask about other needle-s □ no needle-sharing co	haring contacts	S.				
Name	DOB/Age	Sex	Address	Phone number	Contacted □Y □ □N	HCV screening performed □Y □N
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Name	DOB/Age	Sex	Address	Phone number	Contacted	HCV screening performed Y N
Name	DOB/Age	Sex	Address	Phone number	Contacted □Y □ □N	HCV screening performed □Y □N
Please remember to fill on Notes ADMINISTRATION Remember to copy patient			REALD data	when performing in-pe	rson interviews.	NOVEMBER 2022
Completed by				Phone	Case report sen	t to OHA on/ sent to OHA on

Appendix B. Acute HCV case definition from OHA Investigative Guidelines

Confirmed Acute Case Definition

An individual (> 36 months of age) with:

1. A documented negative HCV antibody followed within 12 months by a positive HCV antibody test (anti-HCV test conversion) in the absence of a more likely diagnosis;

OR

2. A documented negative HCV antibody or negative HCV detection test (in someone without a prior diagnosis of HCV infection) followed within 12 months by a positive HCV detection test (HCV RNA conversion) in the absence of a more likely diagnosis;

OR

3. A positive nucleic acid test (NAT) for HCV RNA (including qualitative, quantitative or genotype testing) or a positive HCV core antigen test

AND

Jaundice or a peak elevated serum alanine aminotransferase (ALT) level >200 IU/L or peak elevated total bilirubin levels ≥ 3.0 mg/dL.

Presumptive Acute Case Definition

An individual (> 36 months of age) with:

1. Jaundice or a peak elevated serum alanine aminotransferase (ALT) level >200 IU/L or peak elevated total bilirubin levels ≥ 3.0 mg/dL;

AND

2. A positive anti-HCV antibody result;

AND

3. No evidence of anti-HCV or HCV RNA test conversion. (a new presumptive acute case may be reclassified as a confirmed acute case if a positive HCV viral detection test is reported in the same reporting year)

Appendix C. Chronic hepatitis C case definition, from OHA Investigative Guidelines

Confirmed Chronic Case Definition

1. A positive nucleic acid test (NAT) for HCV RNA (including qualitative, quantitative or genotype testing);

AND

2. No evidence of anti-HCV or RNA test conversion within 12 months;

AND

3. No report of jaundice, elevated bilirubin, or elevated ALT levels.

Presumptive Chronic Case definition

1. A positive anti-HCV antibody test (includes rapid tests) but no report of a positive HCV NAT test;

AND

2. No evidence of anti-HCV or RNA test conversion within 12 months;

AND

3. No report of jaundice, elevated bilirubin, or elevated ALT levels.

Appendix D

☐ Unknown ☐ Other _____

Hepatitis C - Acute

Orpheus ID

confirmed
presumptiv

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□ suspect □ no case

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Name	1 (2)			COUN	TY		
Address Street			Zip	Specia	al housing		
Phone numberhome (H), work (W), cell (C), me	/						
ALTERNATIVE CONTACT							
Name							
LAST, first,initials		home (H), wo	ork (W), cell (C), mes	_			
DEMOGRAPHICS	1				S AND LABS		
DOB / / /	RACE (che	eck all that apply)	Reporter		,		
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if DOB unknown, AGE	☐ Black		name and prior	ie number	MDx Lab-phone ER Lab-other		
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		□ No					
Occupation/grade	□ unknowr	n □ declined	□ Ok to conf				
			Local epi nam	ne			
			Local epi name Date report received by LHD/ _/ LHD completion date//				
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CLINICAL DATA		LABORATORY TEST	·s				
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Jaundiced ☐ yes ☐ no/	/	A IgM anti-HAV	done		<u> </u>		
Pregnant ☐ yes ☐ no/	/	total anti-HAV					
	e date	HBsAg					
Hospital Name:		IgM anti-HBc					
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REASON FOR TESTING (check all that ap	ply)	HBeAg					
☐ Symptoms of acute hepatitis	. 3,	C anti-HCV					
☐ Screening of asymptomatic patient with	Anti-HCV s	signal-to-cutoff ratio					
risk factors ☐ Screening of asymptomatic patient with	HCV RNA (PCR)						
risk factors (e.g., patient requested)	HCV genotype	Lloo	er limit norma				
☐ Prenatal screening☐ Evaluation of elevated liver enzymes				er ilmit norma nce value fro			
☐ Blood/organ donor screening		ALT (SGPT)	,				
☐ Followup testing for previous marker of v hepatitis	AST (SGOT)						
Born between 1945-1965		Bilirubin					

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							CASE'S NAME	<u> </u>			\neg
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Checl	k all th	at ap	ply.								
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			Case educatifyes, date								
			Did the case	have	a documented negat	ive hepatitis	C test in the previo	ous 6 months			
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Name			DOB/Age	Sex	Relation to case	Occupation	Education provided	Last exposure	Onset date	Interview date	Sick
				□ M □ F	☐ daycare ☐ friend ☐ household ☐ sexual			/		/	□Y □N

ADMINISTRATION	Orpheus January 2015
Remember to copy patient's name to the top of this page.	
	Case report cent to OHA on //

Completed by _____ Date ____ Phone ____

Case report sent to OHA on ____/___/___

Investigation sent to OHA on ____/___/___