



## Minding the Gap

### ***This is hepatitis...Know it. Confront it.***

**Greetings!** In recognition of World Hepatitis Day, this issue will focus on viral hepatitis (VH). Included are resources for free or low-cost materials, programs that may be useful for patients to access care and medications, and provider education resources.

#### ***VH and Corrections***

As you know from experience, viral hepatitis is a significant health issue for incarcerated persons. In fact, an estimated one-third of all people living with hepatitis C (HCV) in the U.S. pass through corrections each year. Also, although hepatitis B (HBV) vaccinations are

recommended for men who have sex with men (MSM), people who inject drugs (PWIDs), people living with HIV, and heterosexuals with multiple sexual partners or recent history of sexually transmitted infections, vaccination coverage is too low. One strategy identified to increase vaccination rates among high-risk adults is HBV vaccinations during incarceration.

Jails, given their local nature, are uniquely positioned to embrace a community-oriented public health model to improve individual and community health. Community part-

ners, such as state and local health departments and non-profit organizations can provide support to jail health programs to implement activities such as screening, vaccinations, health education, referral and follow-up for community-based public health services and medical care upon release.

We hope you find this issue useful. As always, please feel free to contact us anytime.

~ [Jude Leahy](#), [Larry Hill](#), [Heidi Behm](#) & [Christy Myers](#)

*Prisoners are the community. They come from the community and they return to it.*

~ Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS 1996

### ***World Hepatitis Day 2011***

July 28, 2011 marked the 4th [World Hepatitis Day](#) and the first year the event has been officially recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The date was selected to honor the birthday of



Dr. Baruch Blumberg (1925-2011) who discovered the hepatitis B virus in 1967, the first blood test to detect hepatitis B in the blood supply, and the first hepatitis B vaccine in 1969. He was honored with the Noble Prize in 1976. The hepatitis B vaccine, an anti-cancer vaccine, has been

credited with saving millions of lives worldwide by preventing hepatocellular carcinoma (liver cancer).

The 2011 theme is '***This is hepatitis...Know it. Confront it. Hepatitis affects everyone, everywhere.***' The theme builds upon the ongoing global awareness campaign

## World Hepatitis Day 2011 (continued)

'Am I Number 12?', emphasizing the scale of global chronic viral hepatitis. One in 12 people worldwide is chronically infected with hepatitis B or C. The theme aims to communicate the following messages:

- Encourage people living with chronic viral infection to speak out.
- Challenge individuals to become better aware.
- Reinforce the prevalence and global impact of hepatitis and reduce associated stigma.

In the United States, an estimated 3.5-5.3 million people are living with chronic hepatitis B or C and the vast majority (~70%) are unaware of their infection. Viral hepatitis claims an estimated 15,000 lives in the U.S. each year, making it the leading cause of infectious disease death in this country.

### Viral Hepatitis Awareness and Education Materials

Increasing awareness of viral hepatitis among people in your facility is a good first step, and there are free, low cost materials available to

help. The following websites have printed material you can order or print, including posters, brochures, and factsheets:

- [CDC](#)—Viral Hepatitis
- Oakland-based [OASIS Clinic's Patient Education Materials](#)
- Caring Ambassadors Program's [Hepatitis C Choices in Care Book](#) and [HCV Advocate](#)

You can even customize materials for your program through the [World Hepatitis Alliance](#).

## Community Re-entry Resources

Transitions back into the community can be supported by linking patients and their families with community-based resources. The following websites may be useful for you to support patient's access to medical and social support needs:

- [Oregon Health Connect](#) provides patients with in-

formation and assistance on health clinics, health care services and insurance options.

- [Oregon Safenet](#) connects individuals and families to services in their community and across the state.
- [Oregon Prescription Drug Program](#) is a state sponsored prescription drug

discount card available for free to all Oregonians.

- [NeedsMeds](#) is a national non-profit organization that provides information about [Patient Assistance Programs \(PAPS\)](#), [free and low cost medical care clinics](#), and a free drug discount program.

## Learning Opportunity for Viral Hepatitis

Want to learn more about viral hepatitis, jail health program models or how national health care reform may help jail health programs?

The CDC offers an online [Viral Hepatitis Serology Training](#). The University of Washington offers the Hepatitis Web Study and the National Training Center for Integrated

Hepatitis, HIV, and STD Prevention Services offers [on-line training modules](#) on a variety of topics.

The [Community Oriented Correctional Health Services](#) (COCHS) developed a [community focused program model](#) and has written on [health care reform and US jail populations](#).

## Questions? Contact us!

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