WASHINGTON, DC – “The AIDS Institute applauds the National Academies for authoring *A National Strategy for the Elimination of Hepatitis B and C* that calls for increased leadership, resources, and access to testing and medications, and urges the Trump Administration and Congress to strongly consider it and take appropriate actions in order to begin to eliminate viral hepatitis in the United States,” said Carl Schmid, Deputy Executive Director of The AIDS Institute.

The newly released report builds upon an earlier National Academies’ report that concluded elimination of viral hepatitis in the United States was feasible, but only by addressing serious barriers. This new report identifies those barriers while laying out actions necessary for reducing rates of hepatitis B (HBV) and C (HCV).

The Committee’s top recommendation is for the federal government at the highest level oversee a coordinated effort to manage hepatitis elimination. Additionally, the National Academies calls on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to scale up many of its activities, including increased surveillance, testing and vaccination programs. In order to increase access to curative hepatitis C medications, which the Committee calls “cost-effective”, they recommend that “public and private health plans should remove restrictions that are not medically indicated and offer direct-acting antivirals to all chronic hepatitis C patients.”

“In order to successfully implement these recommendations, the federal government must begin to take the necessary steps. For one, the CDC is going to need additional resources,” said Frank Hood, Hepatitis C Policy Associate at The AIDS Institute. “Viral hepatitis activities are funded at only $34 million for the
entire country. Instead of debating cuts to the CDC, the President and Congress should be scaling up funding for the CDC. Additionally, instead of dismantling the payer system for health care, we need a strong Medicaid program and private insurance market that must cover hepatitis C curative medications without unnecessary restrictions.”

The report estimates that if its recommendations are followed about 90,000 deaths could be avoided by 2030.

“We can go a long way towards eliminating viral hepatitis in the United States if many of the recommendations in the report are implemented. We look forward to working with President Trump, his Administration, and Congress, to taking the next steps to achieve these goals,” concluded Schmid.

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The AIDS Institute is a national nonprofit organization that promotes action for social change through public policy research, advocacy and education.

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