Statement of Problem

In about 75% to 85% of individuals infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV), chronic disease persists and may lead to cirrhosis (scarring of the liver), liver cancer or death. Most people with HCV have no discernible symptoms for twenty to thirty years or more. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 75% of all HCV infections occur in Americans born from 1945 to 1965, the “Boomer Cohort”, although they represent only 27% of the US population. In August 2012, CDC released a Morbidity and Mortality Weekly report recommending: Recommendations for the Identification of Chronic Hepatitis C Virus Infection Among Persons Born During 1945-1965. In this report, CDC recommended a one-time test for Americans in the boomer cohort.

Objective

Provide Florida-related data to support CDC’s recommendation that Floridians born from 1945-1965 should be tested for HCV even in the absence of traditional risk factors (such as: persons who share drug or tattooing equipment, blood transfusion before 1992, occupational exposures, etc.)

Description of Program

Offer HCV testing to persons born from 1945-1965 in private and public health settings, including sexually transmitted disease clinics, family health, HIV, and other service settings.

Summary and Conclusion

Florida has identified an average of 41 acute and 22,348 chronic cases of hepatitis C from 2003 through 2012. Twenty percent percent of acute and 55% of reported chronic cases are in persons born between 1945 and 1965. Individuals in the Baby Boomer cohort constitute approximately 27% of the total population in Florida. Approximately 309,000 persons in Florida have hepatitis C. An estimated 170,000 of those cases are in the Baby Boomer cohort. Florida has documented approximately 80% of expected chronic hepatitis C cases. With current and new therapies on the horizon for HCV, testing this group will link individuals unaware of their infection to medical services that will reduce HCV morbidity and mortality in Florida and the U.S.

References

2 MERLIN/ESSENCE databases, Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, June 2013
4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Recommendations for the identification of chronic hepatitis C virus infection among persons born during 1945-1965, MMWR 2012, 61 (No RR-4)