HIV/HCV Co-Infection: Challenges and Opportunities on the Path to Elimination

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HIV/HCV Co-Infection

• Approx. 20-25% of PLWH are co-infected with HCV

• Correlated to the Nation’s opioid epidemic
  – Bloodborne illness spread mainly through sharing of needles and works

• Similar risk exposures
  – Nearly 75% of people with HIV who inject drugs are co-infected with HCV
O’Neill Institute’s Efforts to Address HIV/HCV Co-Infection

• Convening hosted by the O’Neill Institute’s Ryan White Policy Project to address co-infected among patients in the Ryan White Program
  – Clinicians and staff at RW clinics
  – Patients
  – Advocates
  – Federal, state, and local agency representatives
Opportunities to Treat Co-Infected Ryan White Patients

- Established relationship with patients
- Coverage of testing and treatment
- Opportunity to test, treat and monitor treatment compliance
Limitations and Barriers

• Inconsistency in testing, testing frequency, reporting
  – Lack of resources
  – Inadequate recordkeeping
• Lack of training of providers
• Challenges in implementing policies and guidance related to HCV
• Difficulties referring patients to proper follow-up care
  – Lack of available specialists and other HCV care resources
  – Prior Authorization requirements
  – Patients only allowed one course of HCV treatment
• Stigma
Hepatitis C: State of Medicaid Access

A report by the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR) and the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation at Harvard Law School (CHLP) finds that most Medicaid programs are restricting access to a cure for hepatitis C, which kills more Americans each year than all other infectious diseases combined. More than half of Medicaid programs received a "D" or an "F" for severely restricting access to hepatitis C treatment.

See how your state matches up...

BEST 5 STATES
Alaska
Connecticut
Massachusetts
Nevada
Washington

WORST 5 STATES
Arkansas
Louisiana
Massachusetts
Montana
Oregon
South Dakota

#StateofHepC NVHR StateofHepC.org
Efforts to Address Barriers

• HRSA Medicaid Affinity Group
  – HRSA provided TA to 9 states to improve coordination of HCV testing, treatment, and cure

• 2016 Secretary’s Minority AIDS Initiative Fund (SMAIF): Jurisdictional Approach to Curing Hepatitis C among People of Color Living with HIV
  – 5 jurisdictions given supplemental funding to increase their capacity to provide screening, care and treatment for co-infected persons

• 2017 SMAIF: Curing Hepatitis C among People of Color Living with HIV
  – 2 sites – aimed at increasing RWHAP clinics’ capacity to prevent, care, and treat HCV
  – Has component to improve coordination with SAMHSA-funded substance use disorder (SUD) treatment providers to deliver behavior health and SUD support

• RWHAP AIDS Education and Training Centers National Coordinating Resources Center developed a free online training curriculum on HIV/HCV co-infection for healthcare providers
  – https://aidsetc.org/hivhcv

• NIH-supported study shows that with proper training, community-based non-specialists can effectively treat HCV

• O’Neill Institute’s Hepatitis Policy Project’s Publication: *Full of Life – The Stories of People Affected by Hepatitis C*
  – Addresses stigma and public misperceptions by telling the stories of 7 people’s journey through HCV diagnoses and treatment
  – Bit.ly/HepPolicy
Recommendations for Change

• Need an elimination effort that thinks systematically
  – Define the care cascade for HCV

• Screening – are we doing this effectively?
  – Consistent guidelines and practices for screening, re-screening, and assessing risk factors

• Overcome barriers to treatment
  – Stop the limit on only paying for 1 course to treatment
  – Partnerships with specialists and other providers needed to prevent loss to follow-up or to assist with meeting PA requirements
  – Innovative treatment approaches
    • Telemedicine
    • Increased collaboration with addiction specialists
  – Improved guidance for ADAPs to utilize resources to cover HCV treatment

• Measuring diagnosis and treatment
  – Metric for curing
  – Tracking progress towards elimination
THANK YOU!

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