

# VIRAL HEPATITIS APPROPRIATIONS: TALKING POINTS AND STRATEGY

MARIAH JOHNSON

COORDINATOR, HEPATITIS APPROPRIATIONS PARTNERSHIP

SENIOR MANAGER, VIRAL HEPATITIS/POLICY & LEGISLATIVE  
AFFAIRS, NASTAD

MAY 11, 2015

# National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors

## Mission

*NASTAD strengthens state and territory-based leadership, expertise and advocacy and brings them to bear on reducing the incidence of HIV and viral hepatitis infections and on providing care and support to all who live with HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis.*

## Vision

*NASTAD's vision is a world free of HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis.*

# Hepatitis Appropriations Partnership

The **Hepatitis Appropriations Partnership (HAP)** is a national coalition based in Washington, DC and includes community-based organizations, public health and provider associations, national hepatitis and HIV organizations, and diagnostic, pharmaceutical and bio-technology companies. HAP works with policy makers and public health officials to increase federal support for hepatitis prevention, testing, education, research and treatment.

For more information: [mjohnson@NASTAD.org](mailto:mjohnson@NASTAD.org)



# Key Messages

- ▶ Hepatitis B and C continue to affect millions across the U.S. and in **your** state/district
- ▶ Public health prevention and care programs are key to ending the hepatitis B and C epidemics
- ▶ Lack of increased investment compromise the nation's response to the hepatitis B and C epidemics

# Funding Request Update

- ▶ The FY2016 budget and appropriations cycle began on Monday, February 2 with the release of President Obama's budget proposal to Congress
- ▶ The President requested \$62.8 million for the CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis, an increase of \$31.5 million over current funding
- ▶ Each chamber has passed a budget resolution, which establishes the discretionary spending limits for the Fiscal Year.
- ▶ **Committees have begun consideration of appropriations bills, House and Senate will likely begin consideration of Labor-HHS this summer.**

# Make the Case: Viral Hepatitis Background Information

- ▶ Viral Hepatitis Overview
  - ▶ 5.3 million people are living with hepatitis B (HBV) and/or hepatitis C (HCV) in the U.S.
  - ▶ Up to 65 % of chronic HBV and 75% of chronic HCV cases are undiagnosed.
  - ▶ Viral hepatitis can be asymptomatic for decades, leading to late-testing and late diagnoses

## Make the Case, cont'd

- ▶ Baby boomers have the highest rates of HCV-related mortality
- ▶ Viral hepatitis can lead to liver disease and claims the lives of 15,000-50,000 people annually

## Make the Case, cont'd

- ▶ Approximately 175,000 veterans are living with HCV, as many as 40,000 of whom are undiagnosed
- ▶ New reports indicate an increase in acute HCV infection among young persons who use/inject drugs who began by using prescription opioids and transitioned to injection



# What Do We Need From Them?

## **CDC's Division of Viral Hepatitis**

### **Support POTUS FY2016 Ask of \$62.8 million**

- ▶ Expand adoption of CDC/U.S. Preventive Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations
- ▶ Develop monitoring systems and prevention strategies

# What Do We Need From Them?

- ▶ Strengthen state and local capacity
- ▶ Enhance vaccination-based strategies to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B

# What Do We Need From Them?

## **Labor Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill**

### **Syringe Exchange Policy Rider**

- ▶ End the federal funding ban on syringe exchange programs

# Department of Veterans Affairs

## **Support POTUS FY2016 ask of \$690 million for VA HCV Treatment**

- ▶ Support House Passed HCV Treatment Funding Increase in MilConVA Appropriations Bill
- ▶ Provides \$696 million for FY 2016 supplemental, and \$660 million for FY2017

# Department of Defense

## Liver Cancer Research

- ▶ Liver Cancer designated as one of the cancers eligible for research funding
- ▶ Liver cancer is on the rise and currently has only an 11 percent, 5-year survival rate
- ▶ Liver cancer is the second most deadly cancer in the world
- ▶ VA is currently treating more than 5000 veterans for liver cancer

# Prevention and Treatment = Cure

- ▶ Effective hepatitis C treatments with high cure rates are now available and more are coming
- ▶ Effective hepatitis B vaccine and treatments that reduce disease progression are available
  - ▶ Identifying and linking patients to treatment will rely on investments in public health infrastructure
- ▶ **Action: Congress must increase funding at the Division of Viral Hepatitis in order to increase the proportion of people who know their status and can benefit from new therapies**

# Nationally Coordinated Surveillance

- ▶ There is currently no funding for nationally coordinated surveillance activities to monitor trends in chronic viral hepatitis
- ▶ Without such investments, stakeholders have limited information on which to base a hepatitis response and respond to outbreaks
- ▶ **Action: Congress must fund nationally coordinated surveillance activities for chronic viral hepatitis**

# Syringe Services Programs

- ▶ Scientific research has shown that access to sterile syringes is an evidence-based and cost-effective means of lowering rates of HIV and viral hepatitis
- ▶ Syringe services programs reduce the use of illicit drugs and helps connect people to medical treatment, *including* substance use treatment
- ▶ **Action: Congress must lift the ban on the use of federal funds for the purchase of syringes**
- ▶ **Congress should support local control and flexibility in use of federal funds, allowing distribution in locations that have been determined by the local public health or local law enforcement authorities to be appropriate for distribution**



# Questions and Answers

Mariah Johnson

Coordinator, Hepatitis Appropriations  
Partnership

Senior Manager, Viral Hepatitis/Policy &  
Legislative Affairs, NASTAD

[mjohnson@NASTAD.org](mailto:mjohnson@NASTAD.org)

(202) 434-8042